Forbrow

002

Missing

Louis [illegible]

Philip Hammers

[illegible]

[illegible]

Norman

Marilyn [illegible]

Marilyn [illegible]

Jonathan [illegible]

[illegible] Tessler

[illegible]

[illegible]

Scott Taylor

[illegible] Walker

Sandra

1. Discussion of Alcohol abuse; during entry Olga gave us

2. Watergate theory — "Conspiring Staff"

3. Computer Age and other professional failures

4. Lisa's suicide — desire to shield family

5. Importance of MS — add to conclusion

arrived at the Sheraton Inn in Martinsburg, West Virginia on Thursday, August 8, 1991. He

Saturday,

August 12, 1991, Manitoba police

formally

[illegible]

[illegible] Bitburg [illegible] Collective [illegible]

Tarnoff [illegible] Bitburg [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] the manner of [illegible]

As [illegible] Economic [illegible] Bitburg [illegible] was [illegible] but he conducted [illegible] only could be [illegible]

The [illegible] before [illegible]

and other well-established practice in the Administration per of conducting "courtesy briefings" [illegible] We also

a liver sample and

from

Casolaro's

Toxicology Laboratory

or two

Blood Spatter Analysis

& Prosecuting

Carlson's close friend

No prior discussion of this

Sent to the Martinsburg police

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[illegible] that [illegible] anything [illegible] very

[illegible] She [illegible] found [illegible]

[illegible] also [illegible] the other party

[illegible] the [illegible] Ms. [illegible]

police [illegible] drawing of [illegible]

person. [illegible] Ms. Waters

again. She [illegible] shown by her story [illegible]

[illegible] report [illegible] it seemed [illegible] again [illegible]

One has been [illegible]

person was, [illegible] that [illegible]

Ms. Waters' [illegible] collection [illegible]

recollection in several [illegible]

conflicts [illegible] with Ms. [illegible]'s [illegible]

came into the [illegible] alone. [illegible]

[illegible] he started drinking [illegible]

spite with only one [illegible], [illegible]

Ms. [illegible] recollection [illegible]

[illegible] which [illegible] beginning [illegible]

[illegible] one [illegible] beer [illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible]

were that [illegible]

corroborated [illegible]

[illegible] beer [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

record [illegible] Mr. [illegible] led to [illegible] recollection [illegible]

[illegible] any [illegible]

by Ms. [illegible] individual [illegible]

[illegible]

The next day, Friday, August [illegible] the front desk at the Sheraton [illegible] desk clerk, Mr. [illegible]

at about [illegible] p.m. [illegible]

Mr. [illegible] his room [illegible] Roxanne [illegible] waited outside. [illegible]

[illegible]

Mr. [illegible] p.m. He [illegible] bartender, [illegible] as if he [illegible]

[illegible]

why would he say he was meeting some Arabs if he had just finished meeting w/ [illegible]?

Jno

Company picture

Answering machine tape

and while he was still on federal

Concerning trees

No prior mention of trip

No context

2 [sic]

In his cover letter Ambassador wrote:

Move to p. 144

I think he did know, or strongly suspected

Dr. Frost

persuasive corroboration of the foregoing analysis finally of grounds.

Alcohol Nyhart"

Why?

involvement in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] his wife at [illegible] summer cottage [illegible] at 5 [illegible] August [illegible] 1961. [illegible] that [illegible] was [illegible] [illegible] receipt shows that [illegible] a purchase of a [illegible] New York on August [illegible], 1961. [illegible] telephone [illegible] call was placed to his brother [illegible] the [illegible] on August 9, 1961 at [illegible]

We have [illegible] to New York [illegible] evidence [illegible] to Mr. [illegible]

Involvement of Joseph [illegible]

[illegible] Mr. [illegible] [illegible] apparently [illegible] Mr. [illegible] had [illegible] was going [illegible] [illegible] exploits [illegible] ~~Ms. Knowland~~ [illegible] Mr. [illegible] arrived, she listened [illegible] When Mr. [illegible] arrived, [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] 9

Several people have suggested that Mr. [illegible] as the person involved in Mr. [illegible] death. We [illegible] supporting that [illegible] Mr. [illegible] 10 [illegible] was an [illegible]

"escaped" from [illegible] Southern Corridor. While Mr. [illegible] was in Washington in [illegible]

Threats [illegible]

During the last few weeks of [illegible], Mr. [illegible] several of his friends that he had been receiving [illegible] phone. In addition, Mr. [illegible] daughter, [illegible] Marion, [illegible] that she was in Mr. [illegible] Monday before he died, that she [illegible] and [illegible] called [illegible] death threats. [illegible] [illegible] over [illegible] of his [illegible] Mr. [illegible] also [illegible] that [illegible] "dangerous" and that he [illegible] his younger [illegible] the house because of the danger. According to Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Carolan's [illegible] believe with the benefit of hindsight, that [illegible] least some of the threatening phone calls [illegible] involved in his work so that people would [illegible] committed suicide. [illegible] might have [illegible] Pittaway said he did not think Mr. Carolan [illegible] and that he "[illegible] conspiracy [illegible] Pittaway's wife, described Mr. Carolan [illegible] Gabrielle Milroy, a close friend [illegible] years, her [illegible] take his death [illegible] would suffer [illegible] and friend, Diane [illegible] everyone to think he was in danger [illegible] appear mysterious. Mr. Milroy also [illegible] who say Mr. [illegible] was [illegible]

[illegible] early musing on the [illegible]

[illegible]

On Sunday night, August [illegible], 1980, the day before news of Carolan's death had become public, a [illegible] in New York City called her a [illegible] Mr. Ginnoff later told the Washington [illegible] that he was [illegible]

Colors reply suggestion to call phone co.

[illegible] they [illegible]

[illegible] alleged [illegible]

[illegible]

During [illegible] Laboratory [illegible]

[illegible] to the lab. The paper [illegible] written [illegible] was able to reproduce [illegible] writing [illegible]

[illegible]

John Phil[illegible]
[illegible]
Fred Alvar[illegible]
Paul Mor[illegible]
Philip [illegible]
[illegible]
Hercules [illegible]
San Francisco
Finish [illegible]

There is no [illegible] words, or why he had [illegible] the piece of paper [illegible]

Lack of [illegible]

Several [illegible]

U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the Associate Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL COVER SHEET

DATE: 10/17/94

TO: Steve Zipperstein

FACSIMILE NO: 213-894-2535

TELEPHONE NO: _____

FROM: John C. Dwyer
Assistant Associate Attorney General

FACSIMILE NO: (202) 514-1724

TELEPHONE NO: (202) 514-4969

NO. OF PAGES: _____

COMMENTS: I thought this might be of interest to you.

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Central District of Illinois

Post Office Box 375
Springfield, Illinois 62705

217/492-4450
FTS/955-4450

October 7, 1994

John Dwyer, Assistant AAG
Office of the Associate Attorney General
Department of Justice
MAIN Building - Room 5132
10th & Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

RE: The INSLAW Report

Dear Mr. Dwyer:

I applaud your efforts and especially your conclusions. To paraphrase Theodore Roosevelt, we spent ourselves on a worthy cause, but for months knew neither victory nor defeat. Your report uncorked one of the "great enthusiasms."

One minor point in your report, however, causes me some discomfort. The more than implicit connection between Mr. Casolaro's multiple sclerosis and his suicide may create too dire a picture of multiple sclerosis. That linkage invites readers to cluck with pity and nod knowingly about the presumably devastating effects of multiple sclerosis. To be sure, a diagnosis of MS -- even a self-diagnosis such as Mr. Casolaro's apparently was -- is no cause for rejoicing. It is not, however, a death sentence or a commitment to a life of pain.

Most of us who have MS do not, to use your phrase, "suffer from" it. MS is blessedly painless (with few exceptions). It annoys like an unwelcomed and ubiquitous backseat driver. Of course I would prefer to push it out the door and speed off alone. But, as an alternative, I do not contemplate suicide, to say the least. Mr. Casolaro apparently did, although I seriously doubt that MS was a significant factor.

I trust that if Ms. Reno, Ms. Gorelick and Mr. Schmidt are not already familiar with MS, you will offer them this note of balance and assure them that multiple sclerosis flourishes even in the Department of Justice, and it expects no pity.

Very truly yours,

FRANCES C. HULIN
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

Joseph H. Hartzler
Assistant United States Attorney

cc: Nicholas J. Bua

LAW OFFICES OF

BURKE, WEAVER & PRELL

XEROX CENTRE
55 WEST MONROE STREET
SUITE 800
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60603

TELEPHONE: 312-263-3600
TELECOPIER: 312-578-6666

ONE LINCOLN PLACE
1900 GLADES ROAD, SUITE 350
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33431
TELEPHONE: 407-391-0400
TELECOPIER: 407-392-9228

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL

(312) 578-6570

BARBARA A. ADAMS
ROBERT H. BRADNER
NICHOLAS J. BUA
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[1] ADMITTED ILLINOIS AND FLORIDA
[2] ADMITTED FLORIDA ONLY

October 5, 1994

John C. Dwyer, Esquire
Assistant Associate Attorney General
Office of the Associate Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Re: Inslaw Report

Dear John:

I read with great interest your report on the allegations made by Inslaw against the Department of Justice. I think your report captures extremely well the continually evolving and changing character of the claims made by the Hamiltons and their attorneys. As you know, the evolution of those claims is one of the many reasons why investigating Inslaw's claims has been such a challenge.

I also thought your examination of the circumstances of Danny Casolaro's death was first-rate. Your investigation was thorough and detailed and your conclusions were wholly convincing. Although your report reached the same ultimate conclusion about Casolaro's death that I did, I must admit that your investigation was vastly superior.

Again, my congratulations on a job well done.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Bua

TO: Steve Zipperstein

FX#: 213-894-2535

FR: David Razig

VC#: 713-902-9015

Called 4/15/94 - informed Razig of the conversation.

Janette - Pls call this guy & tell him (1) he'll be getting reimbursement soon; and (2) we'll send the documents to him [illegible] next month. [illegible]

TEXAS
KTRK TV HOUSTON

DAVID RAZIQ
6061 BEVERLY HILLS, APT. 71
HOUSTON, TX 77057

APRIL 14, 1994

MR. STEVE ZIPPERSTEIN
U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
LOS ANGELES, CA.

MR. ZIPPERSTEIN:

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THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

SINCERELY,
DAVID RAZIQ

DAVID RAZIQ
6061 BEVERLY HILLS, APT. 71
HOUSTON, TX 77057

MARCH 24, 1994

MR. STEVE ZIPPERSTEIN
U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
LOS ANGELES, CA.

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I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS WHEN I MIGHT EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE PROMISED COPIES OF THE CASOLARO PAPERS.

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SUB-TOTAL	192.91
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TOTAL	198.[illegible]
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DAVID

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Receipt [illegible]mber : 103564 [illegible]ster
Date : 12/23/93
Time : 4:31 PM
Co-Worker : 34
Kinko's Thanks You For Your Patr[illegible]

198.00

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*** ACTIVITY REPORT ***
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U. S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Central District of California

United States Courthouse
312 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION
COVER PAGE

FROM: STEVEN E. ZIPPERSTEIN
Chief Assistant U.S. Attorney

ORGANIZATION: U.S. Attorney's Office/CDCalifornia

PHONE: (213) 894-2402 Fax: (213) 894-2535

TO: John Dwyer Fax: (202) 514-1724

DATE: 3/25/94

NUMBER OF PAGES: Three (3) (Including Cover Page)

CONTENTS: Reimbursement Correspondence Re: DAVID RAZIQ's Reimbursement on copies made In December 1993 - Re: Casalez Case

Fax-(202) 514 3/25
Time - 1724

I spoke to Dwyer's Secy today re: Raziq
I told her we would fax this correspondence to Dwyer, he in turn will advance for re: reimbursement

NOTE: If you do not receive the indicated, please call th above.

****

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****

0169D

DAVID RAZIQ
6061 BEVERLY HILLS, APT. 71
HOUSTON, TX 77057

MARCH 24, 1994

MR. STEVE ZIPPERSTEIN
U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
LOS ANGELES, CA.

MR. ZIPPERSTEIN:

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I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE THE CHANCE TO DISCUSS WHEN I MIGHT EXPECT TO RECEIVE THE PROMISED COPIES OF THE CASOLARO PAPERS.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

SINCERELY,
DAVID RAZIQ

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FULL SINGLE SIDED FULL WHITE LETTER LE			
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AUX OTHER STAPLING PER STAPL			

SUB-TOTAL	[illegible]
TAX	[illegible]
TOTAL	198.00
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DAVID

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[illegible] Here X

Receipt [illegible] : 103564
Date : 12/23/93
Time : 4:21 PM
Co-Worker : 34
Kinko's Thanks You For Your Patr[illegible]

198.00

Missing

Louise Goldsworthy
Philip Cammera
Sandra Spooner
Dominic Laiti
Paul Wormeli
Marilyn Titus
Marilyn Jacobs
Jonathan Ben Cnaan
Daniel Tessler
Richard D'Amore
Patricia Cloherty
Garnett Taylor
James Walker
Floyd Bankson

1. Discussion of Alcohol abuse; drug entry, Olympus
2. Watergate theory - Conspiracy buffs
3. Computer Age and other professional findings
4. Lisa's suicide - degree to shield family
5. Importance of MS - add to conclusion

We have no reason to question the truthfulness of the individuals included in the above list. It should also be noted that the list is not exclusive, there are many other credible individuals who have denied various of INSLAW's allegations.

V. The Weight of the Evidence Indicates that J. Daniel Casolaro Committed Suicide

Joseph Daniel ("Danny") Casolaro was a free-lance writer who had been working on a story involving alleged links between various Washington "scandals" of the 1980s, including INSLAW, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), the "October Surprise," the Iran-Contra affair, the Iraqi arms procurement [illegible] and the collapse of the savings and loan industry. Mr.

Casolaro's theory was that these scandals had all been the handiwork of a shadowy group of people whom he referred to as the "Octopus." Casolaro began working on the story full-time in mid 1990.

On Saturday, August 10, 1991, Mr. Casolaro was found dead in room 517 of the Sheraton Inn located in Martinsburg, West Virginia. His body was in the bathtub, and both of his wrists had been slashed. After a brief investigation at the scene, the local police department and the county coroner concluded that the cause of death was suicide. The coroner released the body to a local funeral home, where the body was embalmed. The Martinsburg Police Department sent a teletype to the Fairfax County Police Department in Northern Virginia requesting that Mr. Casolaro's relatives be notified of his death.

Mr. Casolaro's relatives, however, were not notified until Monday morning, August 12, 1991. His brother, a Fairfax County physician, told the Martinsburg police at that time about Mr. Casolaro's work on the "Octopus" story and suggested that many people would have had a motive to kill him. He explained that Mr. Casolaro had told people he was travelling to Martinsburg to meet a key source. He also insisted that an autopsy be conducted and questioned how Mr. Casolaro's body could have been embalmed so quickly, without either the knowledge or consent of Mr. Casolaro's family. Soon after the call from Mr. Casolaro's brother, the Martinsburg Police Department was deluged with inquiries from the news media, from friends of Mr. Casolaro and

from congressional investigators. A series of questions were raised about the cause and circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death.

Faced with this sudden and intense public interest in the case, the West Virginia authorities ordered an autopsy. The West Virginia Deputy Chief Medical Examiner performed the autopsy on August 13-14, 1991, and determined the cause of death as suicide. The autopsy also disclosed that Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis and arteriosclerosis. The autopsy found no evidence suggesting that he had been murdered.

The autopsy findings, however, did little to quell the controversy over Casolaro's death. The media and others raised many questions about the circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death and the adequacy of both the police investigation and the autopsy. Many suggested that Casolaro had been murdered because he was about to expose the "truth" about the "Octopus." Various theories appeared in the media about "who killed Danny Casolaro."

Faced with these continuing questions about its investigation, the Martinsburg Police Department reopened the case and conducted a second, more intensive investigation. On January 25, 1992, West Virginia authorities announced that their additional investigation had led to the conclusion that Mr. Casolaro indeed had committed suicide, and that the case was closed.

Rumors and speculation continued to circulate despite the conclusions reached by the Martinsburg police. On September 10, 1992, the House Judiciary Committee issued their report on the

INSLAW affair. The report raised many questions about the circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death and recommended the appointment of an Independent Counsel to investigate six specific issues involving INSLAW, including "the lingering doubts over certain suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Daniel Casolaro."

After reviewing the Martinsburg Police Department's investigation of Mr. Casolaro's death, the Special Counsel concluded that there was no basis for challenging the conclusion that he had committed suicide. (Bua Report 246-250.) In their rebuttal, INSLAW was highly critical of the Special Counsel's review of this matter and was particularly critical of the Special Counsel's failure to interview certain witnesses.

In light of the intense media focus and the concerns raised by the House Judiciary Committee, we undertook a substantial review and investigation of the circumstances surrounding Mr. Casolaro's death. Based on that review and investigation, we conclude that Mr. Casolaro committed suicide.

A. Scope of Review

Our review consisted of two phases. During the first phase, we reviewed in detail the West Virginia investigations into Mr. Casolaro's death. We reviewed all the police reports and the autopsy report as well as the documents generated during an unsuccessful lawsuit the Casolaro family filed against the funeral home regarding the embalming of

Casolaro's body. Included among those documents were the sworn depositions, taken by the Casolaro family's attorneys, of the coroner and funeral home personnel. We also interviewed the police officers involved in the investigation of Mr. Casolaro's death as well as the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner who had conducted the autopsy.

During the second phase of the review, we pursued various leads that had been raised in the media and in the House Judiciary Committee Report and attempted to answer other questions raised by Casolaro's family. During this phase, we conducted numerous interviews of Casolaro's friends, family and associates in Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland and California. We obtained documents from various sources throughout the United States, including many of Mr. Casolaro's personal papers on file at the Investigative Reporters' and Editors' Association at the University of Missouri.

We also obtained much of the physical evidence originally found in the hotel room and elsewhere and had the FBI laboratory conduct additional tests on some of that evidence. We examined Mr. Casolaro's background and had the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia conduct an equivocal death analysis, or "psychological autopsy." Other experts were consulted as well, including a former President of the National Academy of Forensic Sciences and a George Washington University Law Professor who had previously reviewed the Casolaro autopsy report on behalf of a group of Washington-based

journalists.

We also reviewed documents at the Central Intelligence Agency and at FBI headquarters. In addition, we met with the Hamiltons and INSLAW's counsel, received documents and other information from them and followed various leads they provided. Finally, we reviewed all the telephone calls and mail received by the producers of the television program "Unsolved Mysteries," following the airing on March 11, 1993 of a segment about Mr. Casolaro's death.

B. Casolaro's Death

1. Discovery of the Body

Mr. Casolaro, arrived at the Sheraton Inn in Martinsburg, West Virginia on Thursday, August 8, 1991. He was supposed to have checked out from his room, number 517, by 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 10, 1991. At about 12:59 p.m., Sharon Palmer, the maid assigned to cleaning the fifth floor, knocked on Mr. Casolaro's door and got no answer. She used her passkey to enter the room. She noticed the bathroom door was halfway open. She looked inside and saw blood on the floor and blood on a towel. She did not go inside the bathroom, but left and called for help. Another maid, Linda Williams, arrived and saw the blood on the bathroom floor, but did not enter the bathroom. Ms. Williams left and returned with hotel employees Barbara Bettinger, David Avella, Sandy Bogert, and Eric Weidman. Mr. Avella called the police.

Minutes later Patrolman Glenn Macher of the Martinsburg City Police Department arrived. He ordered all the hotel employees out of the room to go the hotel manager's

office and wait to be interviewed by other officers. The patrolman then went inside Mr. Casolaro's room. Within minutes, Martinsburg Police Captain Ted Anderson, Detective John McMillen, Patrolmen Shannon Armel and Terry Stanley and paramedics arrived.

2. The Death Scene

a. Casolaro's Body

According to police reports and witnesses we interviewed, Mr. Casolaro's nude body was in the bathtub. The water was bloody and cold. The tub was about half to three-fourths full. Mr. Casolaro was sitting with his feet toward the faucet. He was leaning against the side of the tub with his head slumped over the side. His right arm was hanging over the side of the tub, and his right hand was lying flat on the floor. His left hand was submerged under water, tucked beneath his left thigh. Both of Mr. Casolaro's wrists had cut wounds. The fingernails on the thumb, forefinger and middle finger of his right hand appeared to have been chewed.

A used shoelace was draped loosely around Casolaro's neck. Another used shoelace was found inside the bathtub. Two white hefty trash bags were floating in the bathtub. A single-edge razor blade was inside the bathtub. An empty can of Milwaukee's Best beer was also inside the tub.

b. The Bathroom

The wrapper from the razor blade was resting against the side of the bathtub. Next to the bathtub, on the bathroom floor, [illegible] drinking glass and a half-full bottle of

"Caves Alianca," a Portuguese white wine. There was a bloody towel on the floor next to the tub. There were bloodstains on the tile around the tub, on the bathroom floor and on the toilet seat. Some bloody water had splattered across the small bathroom to the sink area.

There was an ashtray on top of the toilet tank. Three cigarette butts were in the ashtray, and a pack of Carlton cigarettes was on the toilet tank next to the ashtray. The bathroom was later dusted for fingerprints. Two prints removed from the bathroom sink were identified later as Casolaro's left index and left middle fingers.

There was no sign of any struggle having occurred inside the bathroom.

c. The Bedroom

The police inspected the bedroom area. They found no sign of forced entry, no sign of any struggle inside the room, and no sign that anyone else had been inside the room. The door to the adjoining room (Room 515, occupied by two visitors from Pennsylvania who had come to Martinsburg for a soccer tournament, a 72-year old woman and 70 year-old man) was locked, and the safety chain was secure. The bedspread was partially turned down, but the sheets were not turned down. There was no blood in any part of the hotel room other than the bathroom.

Mr. Casolaro's clothes were laid out on top of the bed. None of the fixtures in the room had been broken or knocked over. Mr. Casolaro's effects appeared to be intact. His

wallet and driver's license were found inside his coat pocket. There was no sign that anyone had gone through any of Mr. Casolaro's belongings. The police described the scene as "quiet."

There was an unused ashtray inside the bedroom. It had a fingerprint on the bottom, but the police were unable to identify that fingerprint. The trash can inside the bedroom contained a Sheetz Convenience Store coffee cup. On top of it were five empty cans of Milwaukee's Best beer. The police later conducted hair and fiber analyses on various items recovered in the room, but no evidence was developed indicating that anyone other than Mr. Casolaro had been inside the room before he died.

The police found a large black tote back in the bedroom. Inside the bag were, among other items, an empty bottle of Vicodin pills (which the police later determined had been prescribed for relief of pain following oral surgery performed on Mr. Casolaro in 1988); one box of Hefty trash bags (with two bags missing); two green lawn-type garbage bags; one unopened bottle of "Caves Alianca" white wine; one corkscrew; and three packs of Carlton cigarettes.

The police found, on the coffee table, a box of razor blades with four unused single-edge blades inside. The box had room for five blades. The blades matched the single blade found inside the tub.

The police did not find a briefcase or any documents in the bedroom. They did find various credit card receipts,

including two receipts from the nearby Stone Crab Inn for Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9.

d. The Suicide Note

The police also found a suicide note, written on the fourth page of a legal pad sitting on the coffee table, next to the box of razor blades. The top three pages in the pad were blank and had been folded over the top and underneath the back of the legal pad. The note said:

> To my loved ones, Please forgive me -- most especially my son -- and be understanding, God will let me in.

(A copy of the note appears as Appendix 1 to this report). The police later determined through handwriting and ink comparisons that Mr. Casolaro wrote the note with a pen that was on the coffee table near the legal pad. His right thumbprint was the only fingerprint found on the legal pad.[37]

e. Casolaro's Car

The police found Mr. Casolaro's car keys and located his car, a 1981 Honda Accord, in the Sheraton hotel parking lot. There was no sign that the car had been broken into or searched. They lifted two of Mr. Casolaro's fingerprints from the driver's side window. They also found a pack of Carlton cigarettes in the car. The car was impounded and sent to a local body shop for

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[37] Some individuals have suggested that Casolaro may have been forced to write the suicide note, and that he was leaving a clue by making the note uncharacteristically brief and by the reference to God "letting him in." Proponents of this theory note that as a Catholic, Casolaro would have known that suicide was a sin, so he must have used that phrase to tip his friends that he was not dying voluntarily. We uncovered no evidence supporting this theory.

safekeeping.

3. Interviews of Hotel Employees

While the patrol officers were examining the hotel room, Captain Anderson and Detective McMillen interviewed the hotel employees who had discovered Casolaro's body. None of the employees, including the maids, had seen anything suspicious that morning. None had seen anyone enter or leave Mr. Casolaro's room. The last employee who had seen Mr. Casolaro alive was Barbara Bettinger, who had talked with him outside his room Friday afternoon.

4. The Coroner's Investigation

Thirty minutes after the police arrived, Berkeley County coroner Sandra Brining and her husband, Martinsburg city paramedic David Brining, entered Room 517. Mr. Brining photographed Mr. Casolaro's body and the bathroom area. Ms. Brining examined the body. She noted eight cuts on the underside of Casolaro's left wrist and four cuts on the underside of his right wrist. There was also a bruise on the inner part of the upper left arm. There were no other visible signs of trauma to the body. "Light" rigor mortis was present in both arms. Livor mortis was present, but had not yet set, in the buttocks, neck, face, arms and legs.

During Ms. Brining's examination of the body, the bloody bathtub water was drained. Ms. Brining failed to preserve a sample of the water.

Ms. Brining classified the death as a suicide, and contacted

Brown's Funeral Home in Martinsburg to transport the body. Funeral home employees John Arvin and Robert Fields arrived at Room 517 shortly before 2:00 p.m. The bathroom door was removed to allow room for the body to be taken out of the room. The body was placed in an ambulance and taken to Brown's Funeral Home in Martinsburg.

5. Handling of Death Scene Following Removal of Body

After the body was removed, the Martinsburg police locked the room but failed to seal it formally.

On Monday morning, August 12, 1991, Martinsburg police Detectives Catlett and McMillen returned to Room 517 to conduct a further investigation after Casolaro's family had alerted them about Mr. Casolaro's work and the threats he had allegedly received. Although the police had not formally ~~officially~~ sealed the room when they left Saturday afternoon, the hotel manager, Sam Floyd, had kept the room locked for the remainder of Saturday and all day Sunday. Detective McMillen told us that the hotel room was in exactly the same condition as it had been when he and the other officers left it Saturday. The room had not been cleaned. According to the detective, nothing had been rearranged or disturbed. There was no sign that anyone had been inside the room.

6. Examination and Embalming of the Body at the Funeral Home

Ms. Brining spent two hours examining Mr. Casolaro's body at the funeral home on Saturday afternoon. Patrolman Armel arrived at Brown's Funeral Home at approximately 3:30 p.m., after the examination had started. He watched as funeral home employee

Robert Fields drew a blood sample directly from Casolaro's heart. Ms. Brining and Mr. Fields asked Patrolman Armel to notify Mr. Casolaro's next-of-kin. Patrolman Armel relayed that request to Detective McMillen, who had returned to the station.

Patrolman Armel asked Ms. Brining for the cause of death, and she said that Mr. Casolaro had bled to death. She determined that the wounds to the wrists had been self-inflicted, and that the manner of death was suicide.

As Ms. Brining and Patrolman Armel were preparing to leave, Charles Brown, the owner of Brown's Funeral Home, asked Ms. Brining if the body could be embalmed. Ms. Brining said that she was releasing the body to the funeral home, that an autopsy would not be conducted because the death was a suicide, and that the body could be embalmed. Mr. Fields then embalmed the body.

The decision to permit the embalming of Casolaro's body before an autopsy could be performed was not unreasonable, in light of the physical evidence suggesting that Casolaro had committed suicide. However, Ms. Brining should have waited a few more hours before releasing the body, to see whether Casolaro's next-of-kin had been notified. Under West Virginia law, a deceased's body may not be embalmed unless the authorities have first made "due inquiry" as to the desires of the next of kin. West Vir. Code Ann. § 30-6-8 (1993). As discussed in the next section, at 3:30 p.m., the Martinsburg Police requested the Fairfax Co[illegible]ice to notify Casolaro's next-of-kin before the embalmin[illegible] As described below, the Fairfax Po[illegible]e reported [illegible]

and the well-established practice in the Martinsburg area of conducting "courtesy embalmings" is also not, [illegible] has been the subject of much controversy in the press and elsewhere. We have conducted that, although the decision

at 5:00, after the embalming had started, that they had been unable to do so. Although Ms. Brining should have waited until after the Martinsburg police had heard back from the Fairfax County police, ultimately it made no difference because the body would have been embalmed anyhow once the Fairfax County police had reported they were unable to locate any next-of-kin. ~~However,~~ We are unaware of any evidence which suggests that the decision by Ms. Brining approving the embalming of the body was made to further any type of cover-up or conspiracy.[38] In fact, the decision appears to be consistent with the custom and practice in the Martinsburg area. During a lawsuit filed by Casolaro's family against Brown's Funeral Home, Berkeley County, and the City of Martinsburg, an attorney for Casolaro's family took the sworn deposition of Mr. Brown. In his deposition, Mr. Brown testified that "courtesy embalmings" are standard procedure in Martinsburg for decedents from Washington, D.C. (Casolaro, et al., v. Brown Funeral Home, et al., No. 92-C-721, Circuit Court for Berkeley County, W. Va., Deposition of Charles Brown, Sept. 13, 1993, at 27, 35.)

Furthermore, the embalming of the body did not have the impact on the subsequent autopsy that was performed as has been

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[38] The media has reported that Ms. Brining and Mr. Brown had a dispute over whether she had authorized him to embalm Casolaro's body. Our investigation found that they both agreed that she did authorize the embalming. In her deposition during an unsuccessful suit filed by the Casolaro family, Ms. Brining testified that, as she was leaving the funeral home, she told Mr. Brown that "the body is released." (Deposition of Sandra Brining, Jan. 14, 1993 at 92). Mr. Brown then asked whether the body could be embalmed, and Ms. Brining said yes. Mr. Brown confirmed Ms. Brining's recollection.

speculated. Embalming typically precludes the ability to obtain accurate toxicological studies of bodily fluids. Here, however, the embalming did not interfere with the autopsy, as the medical examiner and toxicologist had access to four separate bodily fluid samples and organs that had been unaffected by the embalming: (1) the blood sample that Mr. Fields had taken directly from Casolaro's heart, before the embalming had been performed; (2) a small amount of urine that had not been evacuated at the time of death because of the submersion of Casolaro's body in the bath water, and that had not been tainted due to Mr. Fields' failure to inject embalming fluid into the bladder; (3) a small amount of vitreous fluid from behind the eye sockets; and (4) the liver, which Mr. Fields had entirely missed when he failed to insert the trocar (embalming tool) into that organ.

7. Notification of Next-of-Kin

At 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 10, Detective McMillen called the Fairfax County (Virginia) Police Department and notified them of Mr. Casolaro's name, address, and apparent suicide. He requested that the Fairfax Police Department notify Mr. Casolaro's family. The Fairfax police said they could not do so unless they were notified by teletype. At 4:00 p.m., Detective McMillen sent the requested teletype but received no acknowledgement. A few minutes later he sent a second teletype.

According to police records, a Fairfax County patrol car [illegible] house at approximately 4:30 p.m. The

officer knocked. When no one answered, the officer left his business card on Mr. Casolaro's door. The officer returned to the station and called Detective McMillen at 5:00 p.m. Detective McMillen asked the officer to attempt to notify Casolaro's next-of-kin and to ask them to contact the Martinsburg police to provide instructions regarding funeral arrangements.

Inexplicably, the Fairfax County police made no effort to locate any of Mr. Casolaro's relatives, other than going to his house and leaving a business card. Fairfax police would have found the name of Tony Casolaro in the local phone book if they had looked. The anguish which was ultimately caused by the belated notification could easily have been and should have been avoided.

Finally, on Monday, August 12, the Martinsburg police authorities did what the Fairfax police department should have done two days earlier. Detective Sergeant Swartwood called directory assistance for Fairfax County, received the listing for Dr. Tony Casolaro and called the number. Mr. Casolaro's mother [illegible] Dr. Casolaro's house and answered the phone. Detective Sergeant Swartwood notified Mrs. Casolaro of her son's death at that time.

C. The Autopsy

Shortly after Mr. Casolaro's family was notified of his death, Dr. Tony Casolaro informed West Virginia authorities that his brother had been working on a sensitive story and that he had [illegible] Dr. Casolaro urged the police to conduct

an autopsy. Detective Sergeant Swartwood relayed this information to Ms. Brining who agreed to contact the West Virginia Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. James L. Frost, to arrange for an autopsy. Casolaro's body was moved to Morgantown, West Virginia on Tuesday, August 13, 1991. That afternoon, Dr. Frost conducted preliminary and fluoroscopic examinations of the body. The results were negative. The next morning, August 14, 1991, Ms. Brining, Patrolman Armel, and Patrolman Stambaugh traveled to Morgantown to observe the autopsy.

The summary of the findings of the autopsy which follows is based on a review of the autopsy report and interviews of Dr. Frost and others who were involved with or observed the autopsy.

Dr. Frost spent a considerable amount of time examining Mr. Casolaro's wrists. The undersides of both wrists had deep cuts, though the depth was not extraordinary for a suicide according to Dr. Frost. The angles of the cuts were consistent with the wounds being self-inflicted.

Mr. Casolaro was right handed. There were four cuts on Casolaro's right wrist and eight on his left. According to Dr. Frost, Mr. Casolaro probably made the cuts on his left wrist first. The uppermost cut on the left wrist appeared to be a superficial cut. Dr. Frost told us that the superficial cut on the left wrist was not consistent with a so-called "hesitation cut," something that certain forensic pathologists look for in suicide cases. In Dr. Frost's view, the lack of a hesitation cut could be cited as evidence that the victim was particularly

determined to commit suicide.

The autopsy revealed that Mr. Casolaro injured one of the tendons in his left wrist with a particularly deep cut. However, that injury would not deprive him of the motor ability in his left hand to grasp the razor and cut his right wrist. According to Dr. Frost, that is exactly what he did. The other cuts were also deep, but not so deep as to have been especially suspicious to Dr. Frost.

The autopsy found no indications that Mr. Casolaro had been involved in a struggle. Three of the fingernails on his right hand had been chewed. Mr. Casolaro's brother, Dr. Tony Casolaro, told us that his brother did not bite his nails. However, the autopsy uncovered no evidence that anyone else bit his nails or that he had bitten the nails during a struggle in the hotel room. There was also a faint contusion on Mr. Casolaro's left anterior bicep. Dr. Frost determined that the bruise was probably caused two days before Mr. Casolaro's death. There were other faint blue marks and contusions on the body, but those were determined to be postmortem skin discolorations caused by the embalming process.

Dr. Frost also noted during the autopsy that Mr. Casolaro's tongue was normal, indicating that he did not appear to have ingested any foreign substance. There was no indication of force having been applied to his mouth or lips. There was no sign of choking, strangulation, or drowning. No water was found in Mr.

Casolaro's brain was removed and taken to the pathology laboratory for analysis. The neuropathologist, Dr. Sydney S. Schochet, examined the brain and determined that Mr. Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis. Dr. Schochet opined that Casolaro had been experiencing vision problems. In addition to the finding that Mr. Casolaro was suffering from multiple sclerosis, the autopsy also revealed that Casolaro had "moderately severe" arteriosclerosis.

Dr. Frost determined that the cause of Mr. Casolaro's death was "exsanguinating hemorrhage from multiple incised wounds to the wrists." He concluded that the manner of death was suicide. He estimated that the time of death was between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 10, 1991. Dr. Frost told us that Mr. Casolaro probably lost consciousness within five to eight minutes of cutting himself and that he likely died within 15 minutes.

Dr. Frost also submitted the blood sample that had previously been taken from the heart as well as a liver sample and urine, ~~liver~~ and vitreous fluids which he found during the autopsy and which had not been tainted by the embalming fluids to the West Virginia toxicology laboratory for analysis. The results of the toxicology studies did not alter Dr. Frost's conclusions as to the cause and manner of death. Rather they were fully consistent with suicide.

The toxicology tests ~~performed by Dr.~~ Cash revealed several

Casolaro ~~had a~~ an alcohol content of .04 in

his urine. According to Dr. ~~Cash,~~ Frost that alcohol level is consistent with the metabolization rate for a man of ~~his~~ Casolaro's height and weight consuming the six beers found in the hotel room as well as some of the white wine during the night and early morning hours before his death. No alcohol was found in the blood sample taken from the heart. Second, trace amounts of the chemical components for Vicodin were found in some of the samples. As indicated above, an empty bottle of Vicodin was found in Mr. Casolaro's luggage in the hotel room. And third, trace amounts of a tricyclic anti-depressant medication were also present. The tricyclic was never traced, and we were unable to determine its origins. However, the amount was insignificant. ~~Dr. Cash~~ The toxicology laboratory conducted a series of tests for the presence of a variety of "exotic" drugs or any other substances that could have been used to render Mr. Casolaro unconscious or that could have contributed to his death. All those tests were negative.

Dr. Cash also tested the wine found in the open bottle adjacent to the bathtub for the presence of any drugs. That test was also negative.[39]

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[39] Several months after the autopsy was conducted, a group of journalists in Washington, D.C. asked Professor James E. Starrs, a noted forensic pathology expert at the George Washington University law school, to review Dr. Frost's autopsy report. Professor Starrs agreed to do so. In an interview with the Washington Business Journal (Week of Nov. 9-15, 1992, p. 13), Professor Starrs stated that he agreed with Dr. Frost that Mr. Casolaro's wounds had been self-inflicted. He also stated that he doubted whether any additional scientific techniques would have changed the outcome of the autopsy. Professor Starrs agreed with Dr. Frost that the small contusions on Casolaro's body were caused by the embalming fluid, although he blamed the West Virginia authorities for embalming the body so quickly. Professor Starrs also noted that the suicide

D. Additional Police Investigation

After learning from Dr. Casolaro and others about the nature of Mr. Casolaro's work and the threats that had been allegedly directed at him, the Martinsburg police began a more substantial investigation into the matter. We carefully reviewed the records of that investigation and conclude that it was sufficient given the nature of the allegations. Furthermore, we concur with the conclusion reached by the Martinsburg Police Department that the results of that investigation support the conclusion that Mr. Casolaro took his own life.

The following is a summary of some of the important findings of that investigation:

- The police located and interviewed the occupants of rooms 514, 515, 516, 519 and 520 on the night of August 9-10, 1991. None of the individuals staying in those rooms recall hearing any unusual noises coming from room 517, Mr. Casolaro's room, either that evening or the next morning. Nor did any of them recall seeing anyone entering or leaving room 517 during the morning of August 10.

- The occupant of room 519, Michael Looney of St. Paul, Minnesota, had had several drinks with Mr. Casolaro on Thursday, August 8. Police noticed during the interview that Mr. Looney's wrist was bandaged. Mr. Looney told the police officers conducting the interview that he had hurt himself playing volleyball. The officers were able to verify that story.

- During the interviewing of all of the hotel employees who may have had contact with Mr. Casolaro, a front desk employee told the police that Mr. Casolaro may

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note was typical, in that it was unsigned and made apologies to Casolaro's family. Professor Starrs summarized his view of the case by saying, "[I]f this was a homicide, it would be the most singularly remarkable murder on record, either in fiction or nonfiction."

have had a brown briefcase when he checked into the hotel. No other hotel employee recalled seeing Mr. Casolaro with a briefcase. Police were unable to locate any briefcase during searches of Mr. Casolaro's hotel room, his car, the hotel or the area surrounding the hotel.

- The hotel manager stated that there were six keys for room 517. One key was found in the room among Mr. Casolaro's belongings during the initial search of the room on August 10. The remaining five keys were found at the front desk.

- The razor blades found in the bathtub and in the bedroom were manufactured by Techni-Edge Manufacturing Corporation in New Jersey. Although they checked several retail outlets in the Martinsburg and Fairfax County areas, the Martinsburg police were unable to determine where the blades had been purchased. The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory was unable to lift any fingerprints from the blade found in the bathtub because it had been immersed in water. (We asked the FBI laboratory to attempt to lift a fingerprint from the blade, but they too were unable to do so.)

- On August 21, 1991, during a search of Mr. Casolaro's home, police found two unopened bottles of "Caves Alianca" white wine under the kitchen sink. The bottles matched those found in the bathroom of the hotel room and in Casolaro's luggage. The Martinsburg police determined that the Giant Supermarket chain in Northern Virginia sells Caves Alianca wine. The brand is unavailable in West Virginia.

- During their search of Mr. Casolaro's house, the police found two tennis shoes from two different pairs -- one Nike and one Reebok -- that were each missing a shoelace. The shoes were in the closet in the upstairs bedroom. The police asked the West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory to attempt to match the two laces found at the death scene with the two shoes from Mr. Casolaro's house. The crime laboratory was unable to make a definite match, although a visual comparison of the laces and the shoes seemed to indicate that the eyelet marks on the laces matched the eyelets on the shoes. (We had the FBI laboratory conduct a variety of tests on the laces and the shoes to attempt to match them, but the results were inconclusive.)

- On August 29, 1991, and on September 27, 1991, the Martinsburg police received copies of a passport photo

of an Arab named Hassan Ali Ibrahim Ali. This may have been the same photograph that Mr. Casolaro had shown to Ben Mason in his basement office on Wednesday, August 7. (See discussion below.) There is no evidence that Mr. Casolaro ever met Ibrahim, or that Ibrahim -- whoever he is -- had anything to do with Casolaro's death.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the blood stains found in the bathroom in Room 517 matched Mr. Casolaro's blood.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the handwriting on the suicide note matched Casolaro's known handwriting. The ink used to write the note matched the ink in the pen found next to the suicide note. Mr. Casolaro's right thumbprint was found on the legal pad containing the suicide note.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that Casolaro's fingerprints matched those lifted from the bathroom sink. The fingerprint found on the unused ashtray in the hotel bedroom could not be identified.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the wine found in the open "Caves Alianca" bottle on the bathroom floor was untainted, as were the wine traces on the broken drinking glass on the bathroom floor.

Blood Spatter Analysis

~~In addition~~, In December 1991, the Martinsburg police and the Berkeley County ~~District~~ Prosecuting Attorney asked Dr. Henry C. Lee, the Chief Criminalist at the Connecticut State Crime Laboratory and a nationally recognized blood spatter expert, to conduct a blood spatter analysis of the bathroom where the body had been found. The Martinsburg police provided Dr. Lee with the death scene photographs, as well as a videotaped reenactment of the death the police had prepared with Dr. Frost's assistance on December 12, 1991 in the exact room where Mr. Casolaro had died. After reviewing Dr. Frost's autopsy report and [illegible]r evidence, Dr. Lee created a three-dimensional photographic [illegible]age from the

photographs taken of Casolaro's body and the bathroom on August 10, 1991. Dr. Lee issued his report on January 24, 1992.

Based on the pattern of the blood found in the bathroom, Dr. Lee theorized that Mr. Casolaro filled the tub with an amount of water; poured himself a drink of wine, and sat the glass on the side of the bathtub; sat down on the side of the bathtub; cut his wrists with the razor blade; and then sat inside the tub. Mr. Casolaro then probably got into the bathtub and placed one of the white hefty bags over his head as added insurance that he would die. (According to Ann Klenk, Mr. Casolaro's close friend had discussed with her several months before his death how the author Jerzy Kozinski had committed suicide in a bathtub by tying a plastic bag over his head.)

Dr. Lee theorized that Mr. Casolaro next submerged his wrists into the water and bled into the water for a few moments. According to Dr. Lee, he probably became extremely uncomfortable with the bag over his head and pulled it off, flinging bloody water across the floor and to the sink opposite the bathtub. Mr. Casolaro then attempted to stand up in the tub, bracing himself against the tile wall. By that time, however, he had lost too much blood. According to Dr. Lee, he probably become woozy and slumped back into the tub, causing bloody water to slosh over the side of the tub and onto the bathroom floor. As he fell back down into the tub, Casolaro's arm knocked the drinking glass onto the floor, where it broke. His right arm hung outside the tub as he slumped against the side of the tub. His head came to rest on

the side of the tub.

Dr. Lee concluded that the blood spatter analysis he had conducted established that Mr. Casolaro's death was "not inconsistent with a suicide."

The police also reviewed Mr. Casolaro's financial condition. They were unable to find any evidence that he had earned any income during the months before he died. When the Martinsburg police searched his house, they found his checkbook and checking account statements. The documents indicated that Mr. Casolaro had recently received loans from his sister and other family members.

The police also found a copy of the promissory note for Mr. Casolaro's house. The note indicated that a balloon payment of $178,790 was due August 9, 1991. The police checked with the mortgage company and learned that Mr. Casolaro had received a 30-day extension, to September 8, 1991, on the payment. The police also found Mr. Casolaro's July 1991 phone bill, in the amount of $922.00.

The Martinsburg police officially concluded their investigation on January 25, 1992, after expending over 1,000 aggregate hours on the case. We believe that the criticisms directed at that investigation are not warranted. In our opinion, the Martinsburg City Police Department conducted a thorough, professional investigation. Although Ms. Brining should not have authorized the embalming of Casolaro's body

[illegible] from the Fairfax County police, and although

the Martinsburg police should have sealed the hotel room, those mistakes had no adverse impact on the investigation. We also believe that Dr. Frost, Dr. Cash, and Dr. Schochet performed an excellent autopsy, toxicology, and neuropathology study.

E. Our Investigation

1. "The Octopus"

During our investigation into Mr. Casolaro's death, it became clear that many of the sources for Mr. Casolaro's theories about the government's involvement with INSLAW were the same as those identified by the Hamiltons, though Mr. Casolaro's theory of "the Octopus" involved an even more far-flung conspiracy than that advanced by INSLAW. In a November 1990 book proposal he provided to Herb Karlitz, a New York literary agent, he described the conspirators as follows:

> An international cabal whose freelance services cover parochial political intrigue, espionage, sophisticated weapon technologies that include biotoxins, drug trafficking, money laundering and murder-for-hire has emerged from an isolated desert Indian reservation just north of Mexicali. . . . I propose a series of articles and a book, a true crime narrative, that unravels this web of thugs and thieves who roam the earth with their weapons and their murders, trading dope and dirty money for the secrets of the temple.

At various times, the Octopus theory linked the INSLAW matter, the alleged connection of the Cabazon Indian reservation with international arms dealing, the assassination of "super gun" inventor Gerald Bull, the suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon, the BCCI scandal, the Iran Contra affair, the Iraqi arms procurement network, the collapse of the savings

and loan industry and other matters.

Mr. Casolaro apparently first learned about INSLAW's dispute with the Justice Department in mid-1990 when Terry Miller, a friend, told him about the dispute and encouraged him to talk to the Hamiltons. By everyone's account, Mr. Casolaro became obsessed with the INSLAW story and the web of conspiracy allegations associated with it over the next few months. Mr. Casolaro soon began to develop his Octopus theory whereby the INSLAW affair was merely one arm of an octopus that had been engaged in international intrigue since the early 1950s.

During the period from mid-1990 to his death, Mr. Casolaro took hundreds of pages of notes during his telephone calls with the Hamiltons and others. Mr. Casolaro's close friend Ann Klenk found his notes in the basement office of his house the day his death was disclosed. Ms. Klenk provided the notes to Tara Sonenshine, a producer for ABC's Nightline program. Ms. Sonenshine examined the notes and told Ms. Klenk that they did not appear to contain any clues about Mr. Casolaro's death. Several other journalists looked at the notes and arrived at the same conclusion. Ms. Klenk sent the notes to the Investigative Reporters' and Editors' Association (IRE) at the University of Missouri, where they were catalogued and archived. We obtained a complete set of the notes from IRE. We also obtained copies of certain pages that Ms. Klenk had kept.

We have carefully examined the notes, consisting of several hundred pages. The notes are filled with names, places, phone

numbers, diagrams, and references to various international intrigues, including arms dealing, drug trafficking, chemical warfare, money laundering, terrorism and political assassinations. Some of the notes appear to have been taken during telephone conversations with various people, while other notes appear to reflect information obtained from newspaper articles and magazines. ~~Finally,~~ those notes indicate that Mr. Casolaro spent a considerable amount of time receiving and soliciting information from many of the same sources relied on by INSLAW: Michael Riconosciuto, Charles Hayes, Robert Booth Nichols, and others.

B. August 5-10, 1991

We spent a significant amount of time trying to reconstruct the last week of Mr. Casolaro's life in the hope that such a reconstruction might lead to some answers about his death. The following reconstruction is based on numerous interviews, documentary evidence and police records. (Several of the statements attributed to various witnesses are based on police reports of interviews with those witnesses and do not reflect separate questioning by us.)

Monday, August 5, 1991

On Monday, August 5, Mr. Casolaro saw his brother Tony during the day. Dr. Casolaro told us that he told his brother that he looked tired. Later that day, Ann Klenk saw Mr. Casolaro's car parked outside a bar at a local shopping center. According to Mrs. Klenk, she went inside and saw Mr. Casolaro,

head slumped down, sitting at the bar. She said that Mr. Casolaro "looked terrible." He told her in a tone that Ms. Klenk described as disgust: "I just broke INSLAW. Bill Hamilton's going to be real excited." Mr. Casolaro then told Ms. Klenk, "You can have the story, and if you don't want it, you can give it to Jack Anderson." (Ms. Klenk had once worked as a reporter for syndicated columnist Jack Anderson). Finally, Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk he had "just gotten back" from West Virginia and that he was going back again.

Ms. Klenk said she was worried about her friend. She ordered a pizza for him, begged him to eat something and left.

Tuesday, August 6, 1991

No prior discussion of this

On Tuesday, August 6, Mr. Casolaro again spoke to Ms. Klenk, and discussed the "Octopus" book proposal he had sent to his agent two weeks earlier. Mr. Casolaro also had two phone calls that day with John Elvin, a journalist friend in Annapolis. According to Mr. Elvin, Mr. Casolaro asked him during those two calls to review the "stuff" he had sent him. Mr. Casolaro mentioned that he was going to West Virginia and said he would call Mr. Elvin when he returned.

Casolaro also called his friend Jim Pittaway that day and told him that he was going to West Virginia to meet someone, but that he did not know that person's identity.

During the day, he spent some time packing a suitcase. According to Olga Mokros, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor and [illegible] Casolaro told her while she was helping him pack

that he would not be seeing his son again. Ms. Mokros also told us that he took her into his basement office and showed her where he kept his will.

That evening, Mr. Casolaro had dinner at the home of Larry Stich, a former IBM attorney he had known for several years. Mr. Stich told us that Mr. Casolaro did not seem depressed to him. Mr. Stich recalls his friend telling him that evening that he was going to meet with "somebody" regarding his book project.

After returning home, Casolaro called Robert Booth Nichols at his home in Los Angeles, speaking to him from 1:40 a.m. until 2:[illegible] a.m. EST. Mr. Booth Nichols told us that he remembers Mr. Casolaro mentioning that he was planning a trip to the Cabazon Indian Reservation in Southern California where he would "wrap up the research. According to Mr. Booth Nichols, Mr. Casolaro sounded confident and not depressed.

Wednesday, August 7, 1991

On Wednesday, August 7, Ben Mason, a close friend, came over to Mr. Casolaro's house to visit. Mr. Mason told us that Mr. Casolaro was in an "exuberant" mood that day. Mr. Casolaro showed Mason some papers in his basement office and told him that the papers were in a specific order. Mr. Mason recalls seeing a photocopy of a passport photo of a young man named "Ibrahim."

While Mr. Mason was still there, Mr. Casolaro received a call from Anne Weinfield and her husband. They were leaving Washington to spend a few days at their beach house, and they customarily called Mr. Casolaro to say goodbye whenever they left

Sent to the Martinsburg police

town. Both Ms. Weinfield and her husband spoke with Mr. Casolaro. They both recall that during the conversation Ms. Weinfield told her husband that something was "definitely wrong" with their friend. Ms. Weinfield told us that Mr. Casolaro rambled incoherently and seemed to have lost touch with reality.

Mr. Casolaro also spoke with his cousin, Dr. Louis Petrillo, a New York psychologist, that day. In a letter ~~written~~ ten days later, Dr. Petrillo wrote that Mr. Casolaro sounded "enthusiastic" on the phone, saying that he was "looking forward to meeting with a 'source.'" Dr. Petrillo noted in that letter that he had spoken frequently with his cousin during the months before his death, and that, in his judgment, he had not manifested "any symptoms or character traits . . . that could, in any way be associated with a potential for suicide."[40]

That evening Mr. Casolaro and Ben Mason went out. Mr. Casolaro met a woman while they were at a hotel bar. At 2:00 a.m., after taking Mr. Mason home, he returned to the hotel and called the woman he had just met from the lobby phone to see if she would invite him to her room. She said no, and he returned home.

Thursday, August 8, 1991

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[40] We spoke with Dr. Petrillo more recently. He recalled the August 7, 1991 telephone call. With the benefit of hindsight, Dr. Petrillo now believes that Mr. Casolaro could very well have committed suicide. He stated that he was prepared to change the conclusions expressed in his August 17, 1991 letter based on what he now knew about the physical evidence and other circumstances surrounding Mr. Casolaro's death.

According to Mr. Mason, Mr. Casolaro called him at 6:00 a.m. and told him of his failed attempt to rejoin the woman at the hotel. Mr. Casolaro laughed off the incident and told his friend he was going to West Virginia "to see the guys."

At about 10:00 a.m., Mr. Casolaro went to the office of his insurance agent, J.J. Kelly, Jr. Mr. Casolaro paid the premium for his homeowner's insurance to the Nationwide Mutual Fire Insurance Company. While he was at his agent's office, he called Danielle Stallings, his friend and real estate agent. Ms. Stallings told us that Mr. Casolaro mentioned that he wanted her to arrange a meeting for the following week with an acquaintance of hers whose mother-in-law was knowledgeable about the Philippines. As he was leaving Mr. Kelly's office, Mr. Casolaro asked Mrs. Kelly for directions to Interstate 66 - West, a common route from Northern Virginia to West Virginia.

~~It appears that~~ Mr. Casolaro then drove to Martinsburg, West Virginia, and checked into the Sheraton Inn. The desk clerk, James Lopez, recalled that Casolaro checked in between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. He had a reservation and gave Mr. Lopez a credit card. Mr. Lopez gave Mr. Casolaro one key to Room 517. According to Mr. Lopez, Mr. Casolaro told him that he was not going to open the room right away because he was late for an appointment at the Stone Crab Inn, a restaurant and bar not far from the Sheraton. Mr. Lopez said he thought Mr. Casolaro had an old, "beat up" brief case with him, but he was not sure.

The meeting at the Stone Crab Inn that day, Tom

Haches, reported that Mr. Casolaro arrived at about 12:30 p.m.[41] Mr. Haches, who had previously worked at the Sheraton Inn, recognized Mr. Casolaro from a prior visit he had apparently made to Martinsburg about a year earlier. Mr. Casolaro told him that he was going to be meeting with "some Arabs" at about 1:00 p.m. According to the bartender, no one arrived. At about 1:20 p.m. Mr. Casolaro asked Mr. Haches for four quarters. He went outside and returned a few minutes later. There are both cigarette machines and a public phone outside the Stone Crab Inn.

Mr. Casolaro had a bottle of wine and a draft beer that afternoon at the Stone Crab Inn. He spoke with another man at the bar about a vineyard the man owned. Mr. Casolaro charged twenty dollars worth of drinks on his Mastercard while at the Stone Crab Inn that afternoon.

He left the Stone Crab Inn at about 3:30 p.m., telling the bartender he wanted to go back to his hotel to check for messages and that he might be back later for the happy hour. However, Mr. Casolaro apparently went directly to a Pizza Hut restaurant located near the Sheraton. The waitress working there, a college student named Laura Miller, positively identified him as having arrived at about 3:30 p.m. Ms. Miller said that he ordered a pitcher of beer and a small pizza. He drank the entire pitcher of beer but ate only one or two pieces of the pizza and left the Pizza Hut at about 4:00 p.m.

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Mr. Casolaro was next seen at Heatherfield's lounge, located inside the Sheraton Inn. At this point there is a significant discrepancy in the recollections of two witnesses. The bartender, a woman named Lynn Hitrick, who had served Mr. Casolaro on ~~his~~ a prior visit~~s~~ to Martinsburg, recalled that he walked into the bar between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. Ms. Hitrick recalled that Mr. Casolaro drank beer by himself until about 6:30, when another hotel guest, Michael Looney, a 3M employee from St. Paul, Minnesota, who was staying in Room 519, sat down at the bar and began talking to him. Ms. Hitrick remembered that Mr. Casolaro started drinking bottled beer, but later switched to draft beer. Mr. Casolaro spoke with Mr. Looney until about 11:30 p.m., when the bar closed. Ms. Hitrick does not recall seeing Mr. Casolaro talking with anyone else that night.

However, the waitress, Kim Waters, told a different story. The police originally met her by chance, when they went to the home of one of the Sheraton desk clerks to interview him three days after Mr. Casolaro's death. She happened to be at the desk clerk's home. When the police showed her Mr. Casolaro's photograph, she said she remembered seeing him in the bar but could not remember anything else. Later that day she contacted the police, saying she had now remembered that Mr. Casolaro had arrived at the bar at about 5:10 p.m., and that he sat at a table with another man whom she described as "dark skinned, like maybe Iranian or Arabian." Ms. Waters recalled that both men were drinking draft beer, and that the "Iranian or Arabian" man was

drinking very fast and was very insistent that he be served quickly. She claimed to have served four beers each to Mr. Casolaro and the other man. She also said the other man paid for all the beers in cash. Three days later, Ms. Waters helped the police prepare a composite drawing of the "Iranian or Arabian" person. On September 16, 1991, the police interviewed Ms. Waters again. She still stood by her story, but, according to the police ~~report~~, her recollection seemed hazy and uncertain. No one has been able to determine who the "Iranian or Arabian" person was, if indeed there was such a person.

Ms. Waters' recollection conflicts with Ms. Hitrick's recollection in several important respects. The most important conflicts are with Ms. Hitrick's recollections that (1) Casolaro came into the bar alone; (2) he sat at the bar, not at a table; (3) he started drinking bottled beer, not draft beer; and (4) he spoke with only one person, Mr. Looney, the entire evening.

Ms. Hitrick's recollection is corroborated by Mr. Casolaro's bar tab, which shows that, beginning at 6:00 p.m., Casolaro purchased one bottled beer, then another bottled beer, and then switched to draft beer. Altogether, Casolaro purchased seven beers that evening. Ms. Hitrick's recollection is also corroborated by Mr. Looney's memory of the evening. Mr. Looney recalled meeting Mr. Casolaro for the first time near the ice machine down the hall from their fifth floor rooms sometime between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. A short while later, he went down to the hotel bar, saw Casolaro drinking alone and joined him.

According to Mr. Looney, they spent the rest of the evening talking. Mr. Casolaro told him all about the Octopus project and said he was waiting to meet "some Arabs." Mr. Looney recalled that Mr. Casolaro acted agitated when the "Arabs" failed to show.

Given the fact that both Mr. Looney and the credit card records are consistent with Ms. Hitrick's recollection, we are led to believe her recollection is likely to be the more accurate. In any event, the Martinsburg police were unable to locate any individual matching the description provided to them by Ms. Waters, and there is no evidence linking such an individual with Mr. Casolaro's death.

Why would he say he was meeting some Arabs if he had just finished meeting w/ one?

Friday, August 9, 1991

The next day, Friday, August 9, 1991, Mr. Casolaro went to the front desk at the Sheraton at about 12:00 p.m. and told the desk clerk, Mr. Lopez, that he would be staying one more night. At about 1:30 p.m., a hotel maid, Barbara Bettinger, spoke with Mr. Casolaro outside his door. He asked whether the maids could clean his room right then because he had work to do. Another maid, Roxanne Willis, went inside the room and cleaned while he waited outside. Ms. Willis noticed a bottle of wine on the lamp table.

Mr. Casolaro was next seen at the Stone Crab Inn at about 2:30 p.m. He drank beer until about 5:30 p.m. According to the bartender, Pamela Henry, he seemed depressed and lonely and acted as if he wanted to talk to someone. He bought five beers, one shrimp cocktail and one crabcake sandwich with his credit card.

The bartender who worked the 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. shift at the Stone Crab Inn, Raelene Cook, did not see anyone matching Casolaro's description in the bar during her shift that night.

After leaving the Stone Crab Inn, Mr. Casolaro placed a collect call to his mother's house in Fairfax County at about 6:00 p.m. His family had planned a birthday party for his niece that evening. He spoke with his mother and told her he would be late for the party, if he made it at all.

At 7:00 p.m., a group of people from Pennsylvania, who had traveled to Martinsburg for a soccer tournament that weekend, checked into rooms 514, 515, 516 and 520. Mr. Casolaro was staying in room 517. At about 9:00 p.m., Mary Lehnert, one of the occupants of room 515, saw someone matching Mr. Casolaro's general description enter room 517 with a key. She did not see the person's face, as his back was to her. However, she recalled that he was carrying a brown paper bag.

Shortly after midnight, Mr. Casolaro walked to the Sheetz convenience store across the parking lot from the Sheraton. He asked for coffee, and the clerk, Cindy Noll, brewed a fresh pot for him. Ms. Noll gave Mr. Casolaro a medium coffee and did not charge him because he had to wait for the pot to brew. Both Ms. Noll and another witness in the store at that time, Diane Small, recalled that Mr. Casolaro seemed relaxed, and that he made small talk with them both. When he left they saw him walk back toward the Sheraton.

The above accounts of Mr. Casolaro's movements on Friday,

August 9 is not complete. We have not been able to pinpoint his whereabouts between noon and 1:30 p.m. or between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. The most likely explanation is that he was in his hotel room during those times.[42]

Saturday, August 10, 1991

As described above, Mr. Casolaro's body was found at approximately 1:00 p.m. Dr. Frost estimated the time of death as

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[42] After learning of Mr. Casolaro's death, William Turner, one of Mr. Casolaro's sources for the Octopus theory, claimed to have met with him in the Sheraton parking lot on August 9. Mr. Turner has been unclear as to the time of the meeting, placing it anywhere between noon and 6:00 p.m. Although Mr. Turner has consistently asserted that Mr. Casolaro provided him documents at that meeting, he has changed his story with regard to the nature and amount of those documents. Shortly after Mr. Casolaro's death, he told local authorities that Mr. Casolaro had given him a "stack of documents eighteen inches high." However, he told us that Mr. Casolaro had given him three sealed manila envelops containing documents before the August 9 meeting, and that he returned two of those envelopes to Mr. Casolaro during that meeting. He said he kept the third packet in his safe. In any event, no one witnessed the meeting in the hotel's parking lot.

No

We find Mr. Turner's statements lacking credibility. First, as indicated above, he has ~~had~~ contradicted himself on several occasions. Second, he has made inaccurate statements about his background. Third, he has been convicted of a crime involving false statements. On September 13, 1991, he pleated guilty in federal court to one felony count of making a false statement in 1988 to the Veteran's Administration. He was sentenced to 60 days in prison and five years probation. Then, on December 30, 1993, after Mr. Turner had moved to Tennessee, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms searched his home pursuant to a warrant. They found 23 firearms inside, including several with no serial numbers. He is currently facing probation revocation proceedings in Knoxville.

Conspiracy prosecution

Finally, local police in Winchester, Virginia searched Mr. Turner's house on September 26, 1991, when he was a suspect in a bank robbery. The search took place six weeks after Mr. Casolaro's death. The only items found in his safe were a passport and some gold coins. There were no documents related to Mr. Casolaro found anywhere on the premises.

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Answering machine tape

drinking very fast and was very insistent that he be served quickly. She claimed to have served four beers each to Mr. Casolaro and the other man. She also said the other man paid for all the beers in cash. Three days later, Ms. Waters helped the police prepare a composite drawing of the "Iranian or Arabian" person. On September 16, 1991, the police interviewed Ms. Waters again. She still stood by her story, but, according to the police report, her recollection seemed hazy and uncertain. No one has been able to determine who the "Iranian or Arabian" person was, if indeed there was such a person.

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~~approximately 1:00 p.m.~~ Dr. Frost estimated the time of death as between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.

3. Mr. Casolaro's State of Mind in August 1991

The most difficult aspect of any investigation involving the possibility of a suicide is the effort to determine why a particular individual might have taken his or her own life. Nevertheless, we felt it to be part of our task to at least address some of those issues. In our investigation, we found numerous factors that might have caused Mr. Casolaro concern and/or despair during the last year of his life. By identifying those factors, we do not pretend to conclude that they necessarily contributed to Mr. Casolaro's suicide. Rather, we identify them in order to provide a complete picture of the events leading up to his death.

Financial Concerns

There is no question that, after spending over a year developing his Octopus theory, Mr. Casolaro found himself in a difficult financial condition and was greatly concerned as a result. As discussed above, Mr. Casolaro's home mortgage called for a balloon payment of $178,790 on August 9, 1991. Although the mortgage company extended the payment period for 30 days, that entire amount was coming due on September 8, 1991. The Martinsburg police investigation found that he had already borrowed substantial amounts from his family earlier in the year. While he faced the balloon payment in ~~the~~ matter of weeks, Mr. Casolaro's income prospects appeared dim at the time of his

Concerning trip 7/22/91 letter to K.

~~the INSLAW~~ story, he had repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted to secure a publisher for ~~his story~~ the Petrillo. Mr. Casolaro asked his cousin, New York City psychologist and part-time author Dr. Louis Petrillo, to help him find an agent. In September, 1990, Dr. Petrillo arranged for him to meet Herb Karlitz, a New York City agent. Mr. Karlitz agreed to represent Mr. Casolaro in attempting to negotiate a book deal.

On November 2, 1990, Mr. Casolaro sent a letter to Mr. Karlitz, enclosing copies of various songs and poems he had written. Casolaro mentioned in the letter that he was now working on his investigation "exclusively," but that he was also looking for a paying job while waiting for an advance. Mr. Casolaro enclosed a resume that significantly overstated his prior professional accomplishments. He also enclosed a six-page treatment for the book he was hoping to publish, which he entitled, "Behold, A Pale Horse: A True Crime Narrative."

In the treatment, Casolaro wrote about the Cabazon Indian reservation in Southern California and its alleged connection to international arms dealing; the assassination of "super gun" inventor Gerald Bull; and the suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon. On the last page of the treatment, Casolaro proposed that "[t]he first three chapters of the manuscript should be finished within three months of an initial advance and each subsequent chapter will be delivered every month. The completed book should be ready for publication by the summer of

Mr. Karlitz began searching for a more experienced literary agent who could put together a combined book and television deal for his client. He also asked Mr. Casolaro to sign a one-year "exclusive" representation agreement, under which Mr. Karlitz would receive a 20% gross commission, plus an additional 10% gross commission to any third parties, for any sales of "'Behold, A Pale Horse,' including without limitation phonograph recordings, video, television, motion pictures, radio, music publishing, songwriting, live performances, books, merchandising, lecture(s), seminar(s). . . ." The agreement was signed on March 14, 1991.

On December 10, 1990, Mr. Karlitz contacted Creative Artists' Agency (CAA), a major Hollywood talent agency, to see whether they would be interested in meeting Mr. Casolaro. Six days later, CAA agent Melanie Ray flew to New York and met with Dr. Petrillo and Messrs. Casolaro and Karlitz for brunch. Mr. Casolaro had two drinks before Ms. Ray arrived and apparently did not make a good impression on her. During the meeting, Mr. Casolaro said the "Octopus" project was his "shot at a piece of investigative journalism to put me on the map," and that he wanted to do something "to make my son proud of me." Ms. Ray said that CAA was not interested, but she offered to help him find another literary agent.

Several days later Ms. Ray wrote to Mr. Karlitz, indicating that she had found another literary agent, Elizabeth Mackey, who was willing to represent the "Pale Horse" treatment. In her letter to

Mr. Karlitz, Ms. Ray also referred to Casolaro's behavior at the New York brunch in unflattering terms: "To expect 'cloak-and-dagger' and to get slapstick was quite scintillating."

During the next six months, according to Ms. Ray's records, Mesrs. Casolaro and Karlitz contacted both Ms. Ray and Ms. Mackey dozens of times to check the status of efforts to find a publisher and obtain an advance for Casolaro.

No prior mention of trip

On April 20, 1991, after returning from his trip to see Mr. Riconosciuto, Mr. Casolaro wrote a letter to Mr. Karlitz. He enclosed another treatment, this time entitled "Update on the Pursuit of the Tape and the Jailing of Danger Man." In this treatment, Mr. Casolaro described his trip to Washington state and how he had spent hours searching for a tape that Mr. Riconosciuto claimed contained threats by Mr. Videnieks directed at him. In his cover letter Mr. Casolaro wrote:

> "I must explain how much deeper in debt I am. Every month that goes by without income puts another $4,500 or so on my liability just keeping my family and self alive. On top of that, my mortgage which is now up to $300,000 is scheduled for final payment in September 1991." [sic]

No contact

On May 31, 1991, Ms. Mackey called Ms Ray and told her that she had decided not to represent Mr. Casolaro. Ms. Ray notified Mr. Karlitz of Ms. Mackey's decision. Several days later, Ms. Mackey telephoned Ms. Ray to see whether Ms. Ray could ask Mr. Karlitz to "keep Casolaro from calling her and pleading his case for representation now that she has turned him down." On June 6, 1991, Ms. Mackey wrote a letter to Mr Casolaro, informing him that her agency would not represent him. Mr. Casolaro contacted

Ms. Mackey again in July, and on July 31, 1991, Ms. Mackey sent another letter rejecting him yet again.

In addition to the efforts to find a publisher through Ms. Ray and Ms. Mackey, Mr. Karlitz and Mr. Casolaro also contacted Time Warner, and its subsidiary, Little, Brown & Co. On December 17, 1990, Mr. Karlitz, Dr. Petrillo and Mr. Casolaro met with Kelso Sutton of Time Warner and Roger Donald of Little, Brown. Mr. Donald looked at Casolaro's materials, and said "no." However, he suggested that Time Warner's magazine division might be interested, but that Mr. Casolaro would have to work with a Time Magazine staff writer to develop that story. Mr. Casolaro refused. He said that he wanted to do the project as a book, and he wanted to do it by himself.

Mr. Casolaro called Mr. Donald again approximately three weeks before his death and asked him to review some "new material." Mr. Casolaro faxed the material to Mr. Donald, who reviewed it and was not impressed. Mr. Casolaro contacted Mr. Donald again several days before his death, and Mr. Donald again told him that Time Warner and Little, Brown were not interested in publishing Mr. Casolaro's "Octopus" project, or in paying him an advance.

On July 22, 1991, Mr. Casolaro faxed to Mr. Karlitz his final treatment. The three and one-half page treatment is entitled "The Octopus." He attached to the treatment a two page list of 51 individuals and groups comprising a "Cast of Characters." The treatment surveys various scandals and other

international events of the late 20th century. In his cover letter Casolaro wrote:

> Dear Herb:
>
> I have purposefully left out some names in the CAST OF CHARACTERS for two separate reasons. I will tell you those names and the reasons when we talk.
>
> This is my final week for these marathon hours over the last 12 months. Encountering this odyssey, meeting it with my whole life, is to grapple with something personal since I've risked everything. By Friday, I have to come up with about $5000 just to cover my mortgage payment and my real estate taxes and in September I'll be looking into the face of an oncoming train. Father, what will I do?
>
> Still, I feel the happiness that an eskimo must feel when he comes across fresh bear tracks when he's ahead of all the other sledges. It's just the way it has happened.

It appears that Mr. Casolaro never had any chance of finding a publisher for his work. Mr. Donald, for example, told the Martinsburg police, when they contacted him after Mr. Casolaro's death, that Mr. Casolaro's work was "amateur," and that it reflected simply a rehash of material commonly available in newspaper and magazine articles. Ms. Ray and Ms. Mackey likewise were unimpressed with his work.

Dr. Tony Casolaro told us that his brother would never have committed suicide over money. He explained that their family was very close, several members had done quite well financially and his brother always knew that he could turn to his family for financial resources.

Move to p. 144

The Onset of Multiple Sclerosis

As discussed above, the autopsy revealed that Mr. Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis at the time of his

I think he did know, or strongly suspected

death. We are unaware of any direct evidence that the disease was diagnosed before his death and do not believe that he ever indicated to anyone that he was suffering from MS. ~~In fact,~~ our ~~investigation indicates that~~ the last time he had been to a doctor was 18 months before his death when he needed emergency treatment after accidentally dropping a barbell on his head.

However, there are some indications that the disease was beginning to affect his life regardless of whether he knew it was MS. For example, during June and July 1991, some of Mr. Casolaro's friends noticed that he seemed to be having certain physical problems. Ann Klenk noted that Mr. Casolaro experienced some sort of motor difficulty with his right hand and had trouble opening a window in her house. On another occasion Mr. Casolaro, who was in apparently good physical shape, had trouble finishing a friendly volleyball game. On another occasion, he was too exhausted to help his friend Bill Webster paint his house. Casolaro also complained on separate occasions to both Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk about vision trouble. He began borrowing Wendy Weaver's eyeglasses for reading and reduced his night driving. Ms. Weaver observed that Mr. Casolaro also seemed to have weakness in his limbs, and that he could not perform various simple tasks around the house.

Also, several weeks before his death, he confided to his friend Ann Klenk that he was "having trouble thinking." According to Ms. Klenk, he said that "if I ever couldn't think I'd kill myself."

Finally, Mr. Casolaro approached Anne Weinfield, a long-time friend and nurse, several months before he died and asked her about "research" he was doing about "slow acting viruses," including MS. Ms. Weinfield recalls that he specifically asked her about the symptoms and consequences of MS.

Other Indications

There were some other indications that are, at the very least, consistent with a state of mind contemplating suicide. For example, several days before his death, Mr. Casolaro showed Zoe Gabrielle Milroy a letter that he had written to his son in which he imparted what Ms. Milroy described as "heavy" fatherly advice. Ms. Milroy told us that she immediately asked Mr. Casolaro if the letter was actually a suicide note. She said he changed the subject.

Four days before his death, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor, Olga Mokros, came to his house. She worked as a housekeeper for Mr. Casolaro. Ms. Mokros helped Mr. Casolaro pack a suitcase as he told her he was going on a trip. She asked if she should prepare the house for his son, who was expected on a visit from Colorado in two weeks. According to Ms. Mokros, Mr. Casolaro told her that he "would not see [his son]" anymore. He then took her into his basement office, and showed her where he kept his will.

There were other indications of strange and perhaps suicidal behavior as well. For example, in approximately May 1991, Mr. Casolaro was housesitting for his friend Bill Webster. According to Mr. Webster, Mr. Casolaro called her at 5:00 one morning, and

told her he had hurt himself. He said he had "spent the night on the roof" of the house and that he had fallen off and hurt his leg. Several days later, however, Mr. Webster called Ms. Klenk, and told her he had found a broken ceramic object and some bloody towels in his basement. During the autopsy, ~~the medical examiner~~ Dr. Frost found a healed scar on the inside of Mr. Casolaro's right leg near the femoral canal and vein.

Ms. Klenk also told us that in approximately October 1990, Mr. Casolaro had a mysterious auto accident in which his car went off the side of the highway. Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk and Wendy Weaver that he thought he had been forced off the road, but he did not want to report the incident to the police or to seek medical treatment. We were unable to learn enough about this incident to determine whether it was a legitimate accident, a staged suicide attempt or a homicide attempt.

Some of his friends noticed that he had become "obsessed" and "all consumed" with the "Octopus" story by early 1991. Two of Mr. Casolaro's closest friends, Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk, both report that he was completely immersed in the story. They both told us that Mr. Casolaro slept and ate very little during the final months of his life.

Jim Pittaway, who had known Casolaro for several years, told us that beginning in February 1991, Casolaro slipped into a "fantasy land" of conspiracy and intrigue, fed by the "pathological liars" who had been giving him information and that his obsession with the story worsened as the months progressed.

Other friends say that Casolaro was "losing his grip" on reality.

Mr. Casolaro frequently spoke with various friends and acquaintances about his work, seeking their input about his theories and bouncing ideas off them. Ann Klenk says his voice seemed constantly hoarse. Dr. Petrillo and Ann Klenk both told us that Mr. Casolaro was absorbing huge amounts of information; so much so that he was having trouble organizing it in his mind. Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk that he was becoming frustrated at his inability to organize his thoughts and reduce his ideas to writing. Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk report that he was "disappointed" and "hurt" at his failure to secure a publisher or obtain an advance. Ann Klenk, herself a professional journalist, suggested to Casolaro that he try to break the project into smaller, more manageable bits, and to try publishing it piecemeal, perhaps as a series of newspaper or magazine articles rather than as a book.

Not all of Casolaro's friends considered him to have been depressed or emotionally upset however. Ben Mason and Wendy Weaver, for example, report that Casolaro appeared enthusiastic about the "Octopus" project and insist that he continued to be generally upbeat and happy.

Psychological Autopsy

Finally, at our request, the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, located at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, conducted an equivocal death analysis, or "psychological autopsy," of Mr. Casolaro. Three FBI behavioral

scientists prepared a report examining Mr. Casolaro's life history and his behavior during the final weeks and months of his life. They also reviewed the autopsy report. They concluded that Mr. Casolaro had committed suicide and that he may have intentionally "scripted" the end to his own life.

The behavioral scientists noted that the "one common denominator in the life of Mr. Casolaro up until 1990 appeared to be feelings of high expectations of success, followed by disappointments." They found that while Mr. Casolaro "wore the facade of the eternal optimist . . . deep down inside he may have perceived himself as a failure as an author, an investigative reporter, a husband, a father and as a businessman." The behavioral scientists found his physical problems and possible concern about multiple sclerosis very significant, noting that "the thought of having a progressively debilitating disease may have been overwhelming."

Added to the other "stressors" in Mr. Casolaro's life, he may have believed that his situation was deteriorating and that "he was running out of time." The report noted that by "planting the seeds" in the minds of those close to him that he may have been killed, Mr. Casolaro thought he might be alleviating the guilt feelings his family and friends would feel for not preventing his suicide. In addition, Mr. Casolaro might have hoped that by making his death look mysterious, he might gain in death the journalistic fame he had never enjoyed in life, by becoming "a martyr for truth and justice,"

"dying for a story," becoming "a martyr for truth and justice," only to have been "silenced on the eve of his greatest triumph by the forces of evil."

Most forensic scientists regard the psychological autopsy tool as a valuable aid in understanding the mental state leading to an individual's decision to commit suicide. However, the courtroom evidentiary value of psychological autopsies has recently been criticized in a law review article. Ogloff and Otto, Psychological Autopsy: Clinical and Legal Perspectives, 37 St. Louis U.L.J. 607 (1993) (attacking reliability of psychological autopsies). For purposes of this report, we ~~simply~~ regard the psychological autopsy as ~~instructive.~~ persuasive corroboration of the forensic pathologist's finding of suicide.

4. Allegations Concerning Mr. Casolaro's Death

There is no ~~direct~~ evidence that Mr. Casolaro's death was anything other than a suicide. ~~Nor is there any~~ direct ~~circumstantial~~ evidence placing any other individual in Mr. Casolaro's hotel room on either the evening of August 9 or the morning of August 10, 1991. ~~Furthermore, the evidence appears to be wholly consistent with suicide.~~ Nevertheless, several individuals have speculated that some sort of foul play was involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. In this section, we review those allegations~~, and the evidence which is cited as supporting the charges.~~

Ethyl Alcohol Injection

INSLAW recently asserted that perhaps someone entered Mr. Casolaro's room and injected him above the spine with "ethyl

West Virginia toxicologist, found no ethyl alcohol in Mr. Casolaro's blood. Moreover, Dr. Frost found no injection sites anywhere on his body. Pure ethyl alcohol would have been particularly irritating to the skin, but no such irritations were found during the autopsy.

We asked Dr. Yale Caplan, a Baltimore toxicologist and former President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, about the "ethyl alcohol absolut" theory. He agreed with Dr. Frost that it would have been impossible for Casolaro to have received such an injection without Dr. Frost seeing evidence of it during the autopsy. Dr. Caplan also noted that such an injection would have to have been precisely and expertly made, with Casolaro's cooperation, for it to have achieved a "nerve-deadening" effect.

Involvement of Mr. Riconsciuto

On September 30, 1991, Robert Booth Nichols, one of Mr. Casolaro's primary sources, told Detective Sergeant Swartwood of the Martinsburg Police Department that he thought Mr. Casolaro had been murdered and that Michael Reconosciuto was probably involved in some way. He did not and has not provided any basis for those allegations other than his claims that Mr. Casolaro was investigating some dangerous individuals.

We are unaware of any evidence linking Mr. Riconosciuto to Mr. Casolaro's death. Further, Mr. Riconosciuto was in prison in Tacoma, Washington, awaiting trial on methamphetamine charges, on the day Mr. Casolaro's body was discovered.

Involvement of Robert Booth Nichols

Robert Booth Nichols, a self-styled "international businessman," was one of Mr. Casolaro's primary sources. Telephone records from the last few months of Mr. Casolaro's life indicate that the two men spoke regularly and at length during that time period.[43]

According to several of Mr. Casolaro's friends, he spoke often of Mr. Booth Nichols and described him as a mysterious figure with connections to Japanese organized crime, the intelligence community and international arms dealers. Mr. Casolaro told several friends that he had heard from other sources that Mr. Booth Nichols was dangerous, and that he had been involved in several murders.

An article in the January 1993 issue of the Spy Magazine suggests that Mr. Booth Nichols may have had Mr. Casolaro killed because he feared Mr. Casolaro was about to expose him as a someone who had years earlier offered to become an FBI informant against the mafia. We found no evidence that he had anything to do with Mr. Casolaro's death. Furthermore, he was in London on the day that Mr. Casolaro died.[44]

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[43] Mr. Booth Nichols and Mr. Casolaro also met at least once during the early summer of 1991. The two men had dinner at a restaurant in Virginia. The following day, Mr. Casolaro introduced him to his friend Wendy Weaver. Contrary to some published reports, Ms. Weaver told us that Mr. Booth Nichols did not punch, grab or beat up anyone in a bar while she was with him and that he did not boast of connections with organized crime.

[44] Though Mr. Booth Nichols conveyed an image of intrigue to Mr. Casolaro, it is clear that at least some of that image was exaggerated. For example, in a lawsuit against the Los Angeles

Involvement of Peter Videnieks

Mr. Riconosciuto and others have suggested that Peter Videnieks, the Department of Justice contracting officer on the PROMIS contract, was also somehow involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. Again, there is no evidence whatsoever of Mr. Videnieks's involvement. The allegations appear to rest on the fact that Mr. Videnieks' wife works for Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the state in which Mr. Casolaro's death occurred, and that Mr. Videniek was a friend of Joseph Cueller.

In addition, Charles Hayes, the Kentucky salvage dealer, told Martinsburg police that Peter Videnieks and Dr. Earl Brian had gone to the Sheraton Inn in Martinsburg around the time of Mr. Casolaro's death to play in a "high-stakes poker game, requiring $10,000 minimum to sit at the table." The police found it difficult to believe that gaming of that magnitude could have been going on in Martinsburg without their knowledge. Nevertheless, they investigated this lead but were unable to corroborate it. As discussed above, we believe Mr. Hayes lacks credibility.

why?

During an interview with us, Mr. Videnieks denied having any

Police Department, he testified that he had been a member of the United States intelligence community for many years. (Booth Nichols v. City of Los Angeles, No. NCC 31322B, Trial Transcript, Mar. 11, 1993, 32 et seq.) No evidence supports that claim. In fact, we were informed by the CIA that Mr. Booth Nichols applied to the CIA for a job in 1972 but was not successful. Mr. Booth Nichols also testified that he had once "been instructed" to make a bid to purchase the assets of the Summa Corporation in the late 1970s, following Howard Hughes' death. (Id. 141-51). The documents connected to that incident, however, reflect that Summa summarily rejected Booth Nichols' overtures.

involvement in Mr. Casolaro's death and claimed that he was with his wife at their summer cottage in Treadwell, New York, from August 5 to August 11, 1991. His personnel records reflect that he was on leave during this time period, and a credit card receipt shows that he made a purchase at a bookstore in Oneonta, New York on August 9, 1991. His telephone records indicate that a call was placed to his brother from the Treadwell cottage on August 9, 1991 at 8:35 p.m.

We have no reason to question Mr. Videniek's claim that he was in New York on August 10, 1991 and are unaware of any evidence linking Mr. Videnieks to Mr. Casolaro's death.

Involvement of Joseph Cueller

Army Reserve Major Joseph Cuellar also was in contact with Mr. Casolaro during the last few months of his life. Mr. Casolaro apparently met Mr. Cuellar by chance one afternoon in May 1991 at "The Sign of the Whale" bar in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Cuellar had gone to the bar expecting to meet some friends who were going to celebrate his return from Operation Desert Storm. Mr. Casolaro, who was already seated at the bar waiting for his friend Lynn Knowles when Mr. Cueller arrived, struck up a conversation with Mr. Cuellar. Mr. Cuellar talked of his exploits in the Army special forces, and, according to Mr. Cueller, Mr. Casolaro became fascinated. After Ms. Knowles arrived, she listened as the two men discussed various military issues. When Mr. Cuellar's friends arrived, they made arrangements to meet again.

The two men talked on the phone several times after they first met. They also saw each other at least two additional times. In addition, Mr. Cuellar started dating Ms. Knowles.

During one of their conversations, Mr. Casolaro apparently asked about various individuals involved in his "Octopus" story. Mr. Cuellar told him he knew Peter Videnieks. According to Mr. Cueller, he explained that he knew Mr. Videnieks because his former fiance had worked with Mr. Videnieks' wife in the Capitol Hill office of West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd. Both Mr. Cuellar and Mr. Videnieks told us that their relationship was social, that they had double-dated with their significant others a number of times, and that they saw less of each other after Mr. Cuellar broke up with his fiance.

Once he learned of Mr. Cuellar's relationship with Mr. Videnieks, Mr. Casolaro asked Mr. Cuellar repeatedly to arrange a meeting with Mr. Videnieks. Mr. Casolaro wanted to interview Mr. Videnieks about the allegations made by Mr. Riconosciuto in his March 1991 affidavit that Mr. Videnieks had threatened him. Mr. Cueller called Mr. Videnieks to try to arrange a meeting, but Mr. Videnieks refused.[45]

After Mr. Casolaro died, Mr. Cuellar stopped dating Ms. Knowles. She told us that at one point, as their relationship

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[45] According to Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Casolaro confided in him near the end of his life, expressing frustration that he had become so wrapped up in the "Octopus" story that he had lost his perspective and was unable to arrange the material into a cohesive story. Mr. Casolaro also told him that he was in financial distress and that he was close to losing his house.

was deteriorating, he made a veiled threat to her, stating that she was asking too many questions about Mr. Casolaro, that she had two children, and she would not be doing them a favor if she were to wind up like Mr. Casolaro or another journalist who had been killed in Guatemala. Mr. Cuellar denied making those statements to her.

Several people have suggested that Mr. Cuellar was somehow involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. We found no evidence supporting that hypothesis. On the day Mr. Casolaro died, August 10, 1991, Cuellar was in Washington, D.C., working on his "outprocessing" from Desert Storm, and his "in-processing" into the Southern Command. Several witnesses have verified that he was in Washington on August 10, 1991.

Threats Directed at Mr. Casolaro

During the last few weeks of his life, Mr. Casolaro told several of his friends that he had been receiving death threats over the telephone. In addition, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor, Olga Mokros, told us that she was in Mr. Casolaro's house on the Monday before he died, that she answered the phone, and that the caller uttered a death threat. She could not recall any other specific occasions on which Mr. Casolaro received such a call, even though she was at his house nearly every day. Mr. Casolaro also told several people that the story he was working on was "dangerous" and that he sent his younger brother John away from the house because of the danger. According to Dr. Tony Casolaro, his brother once told him, "If I die, don't believe it was an

accident."

However, several of Casolaro's closest friends told us they now believe, with the benefit of hindsight, that he invented at least some of the threatening phone calls and the other "dangers" involved in his work so that people would believe, after he committed suicide, that he might have been murdered. Jim Pittaway told us that he thinks Mr. Casolaro committed suicide and that he "shrouded his death in mystery" so that his conspiracy theories would outlive him. Lillian Pittaway, Jim Pittaway's wife, described Mr. Casolaro as self-destructive. Zoe Gabrielle Milroy, a close friend of Mr. Casolaro's for fourteen years, believes that he "perpetrated this conspiracy theory" to make his death seem mysterious and to ease the pain his family would suffer from an outright suicide. Pete Kennedy, a guitarist and friend, shares Ms. Milroy's view that Mr. Casolaro wanted everyone to think he was in danger, so that his death would appear mysterious. Ms. Milroy also discounts the views of those who say Mr. Casolaro was not depressed, noting that he was a "consummate actor" who could be "laughing on the outside, but very hurting on the inside."

Casolaro might to call phone co

"Village Voice" Phone Call

On Sunday night, August 11, 1991, the day before news of Casolaro's death had become public, a writer at the Village Voice in New York City named Dan Bishoff received a telephone call. Mr. Bishoff later told the Martinsburg police that he was in his office that evening when the phone rang on a direct dial line.

The caller told him, "There has been a death of a journalist in West Virginia that needs to be looked into." Mr. Bishoff told the police that the caller may have mentioned the name "Casserole."

We spoke with Mr. Bishoff. Although he continues to assert that he received a telephone call on August 11, he said that, upon reflection, he is not sure whether the caller mentioned the name "Casserole" or anything else approximating Casolaro. He told us that many "conspiracy buffs" had his inside telephone line, and he frequently received calls about dead journalists. He indicated that at the time he spoke with the Martinsburg police, he "wanted it to be true" that Mr. Casolaro had been murdered, but that now he believes he committed suicide. He told us that he now regards the Sunday night telephone call as "not significant."

Casolaro's Fear of Needles and Blood

Some of Mr. Casolaro's family and friends suggest that he would not have committed suicide by cutting his wrists because he was frightened of needles and the sight of blood. We spoke with several doctors and dentists who treated Mr. Casolaro during the years before his death. Tony Casolaro's medical partner, Dr. Steven Zimmet, told us that during a routine physical examination approximately two years before Casolaro died, Casolaro put up a fuss before submitting to a blood test. However, Dr. Stanley Levin, who performed a root canal on Casolaro in December 1990, told us that Mr. Casolaro exhibited no fear of needles, blood,

pain, or any of the other incidents of oral surgery.

Casolaro's Planned Meeting In West Virginia

Mr. Casolaro told many of his friends and family that he was going to West Virginia to meet a "source." No one with whom we spoke recalls Casolaro ever identifying who it was he supposedly planned to meet. Mr. Casolaro himself was inconsistent in his description of the "source," telling the Weinfields that he did not know the identity of the person he was going to meet; telling Lillian Pittaway that he was going to meet someone who would give him his "biggest tip;" and telling Ben Mason that he was going to see "the guys."

As discussed in some detail above, we were able to account for most of Mr. Casolaro's time in West Virginia. We were unable to find any conclusive evidence that he met with anyone while in Martinsburg other than his chance meetings with various individuals at bars and restaurants. However, as noted above, a waitress at the Sheraton's Heatherfield Lounge said she saw Mr. Casolaro meeting with either an "Iranian or Arabian" individual on Thursday, August 8. Also, William Turner claims to have met with Mr. Casolaro on the afternoon of August 9.[46]

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[46] Mr. William Turner recently told the Hamiltons, who relayed the information to us, that Mr. Casolaro planned to meet in Martinsburg with Peter Videnieks, Joseph Cuellar, an unidentified person from Senator Byrd's office, an unidentified IRS employee and attorney Robert Altman. A caller to the "Unsolved Mysteries" hot line reported seeing Clark Clifford and Robert Altman driving in Martinsburg on the day of Mr. Casolaro's death in a late model Chevrolet Caprice. We have no reason to believe either of these claims.

For the reasons indicated above, we are not convinced that either of these meetings took place. However, regardless whether these meetings took place, there is no evidence linking any of the alleged participants in the meetings to Mr. Casolaro's death.

The Paper in Casolaro's Shoe

During forensic testing, the West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory found a folded piece of paper inside Mr. Casolaro's left shoe. The shoe had been found in Room 517, next to the bed. The paper had indentations, as if someone had written something on a page on top of the paper. The laboratory determined that the paper had come from the same legal pad on which Mr. Casolaro had written the suicide note. The laboratory was able to reproduce the impressions left on the paper. The writing was Mr. Casolaro's; and the paper read as follows:

Outline

Chapter on 1980.
Terrorist underground. Afghanistan. Mideast. Iran.
John Philip Nichols after arrival
Indian Reservation
Fred Alvarez
Paul Morasca
Philip Arthur Dempson
Fresno
Hercules -- Bill Kilpatrick The Big Tex -- Ricono
San Francisco
Finish up chapter w/ Paul M. & Fred A. / ord

There is no indication when Casolaro had written those words, or why he had put the piece of paper inside his shoe.

Lack of Documents

Several of Mr. Casolaro's friends and family members told us that Mr. Casolaro typically carried a significant number of notes

~~words, or why he had put the piece of paper inside his shoe.~~

Lack of Documents

Several of Mr. Casolaro's friends and family members told us that Mr. Casolaro typically carried a significant number of notes and documents with him. The fact that no documents were found in Mr. Casolaro's hotel room following his death, they suggest, may indicate that he was killed and his notes taken.

We disagree. There is no credible evidence that Mr. Casolaro ever had any documents with him while he was in Martinsburg. All the hotel employees, including the maids that cleaned his room, told the police that they never saw any documents either in Mr. Casolaro's room or in his immediate possession. Nor wa he seen with any documents at any other location in Martinsburg. In short, there is no credible evidence that there were ever any documents reflecting his investigation in his hotel room.

Mr. Lopez, the desk clerk, said he may have seen Mr. Casolaro with a briefcase but he is not sure. In light of his lack of certainty and the fact that none of the other hotel employees recall seeing a briefcase or documents, we believe that Mr. Lopez was possibly mistaken.[47]

F. Conclusion

The overwhelming physical evidence points to the conclusion

[47] William Turner claims to have given Mr. Casolaro some documents on Friday, August 9, 1991. As discussed above, we find his story to be wholly unreliable.

during the last few months of Mr. Casolaro's life that he was despondent and exhausted. Although there were mistakes made during the original investigation into the death (most particularly the failure to seal the room and the early embalming of the body), we have no reason to believe that the original investigations were not thorough or undertaken in anything other than the utmost good faith. Based on our review of all the evidence, we concur with the conclusion reached by Martinsburg police authorities that Mr. Casolaro took his own life.

We reached that conclusion after carefully considering the questions and concerns raised by his family and friends as well as by others. After reviewing them, we believe that many of those questions are typical of the types of questions that follow any suicide. As for the allegations of foul play raised by some individuals, there is simply no evidence supporting the involvement of any of the individuals identified in Mr. Casolaro's death.

VI. The Attorney General Should Not Appoint an Independent Prosecutor to Further Investigate INSLAW's Charges.

In its 1992 report, the House Judiciary Committee recommended that the Attorney General appoint an independent counsel to investigate, among other things, "INSLAW's allegations of a high level conspiracy within the Department to steal Enhanced PROMIS software to benefit friends and associates of former Attorney General Meese." (House Report 113.) Since that time, the independent counsel law has expired and has not yet

Date: Friday, April 29, 1994 7:05 pm
From: SMO02(DAVIS)
Subject: please call me when you receive

this at 202-514-4969 Debbie Davis or John Dwyer

E-Mail Rec'd - 4:22 p.m. LA-Time.
I called Debbie to confirm receipt
at 4:22 p.m.

Steve I have E-Mailed
this document to your atty.

1) "Mr." or just Carolyn
2) ~~Book~~ Efforts to find publisher
3) Order not logical
4) Too topical + legalistic
5) Missing phrase not sep. for emphasis
6) "Please move" is when it moves

VI. The Weight of the Evidence Indicates that J. Daniel Casolaro Committed Suicide

Joseph Daniel ("Danny") Casolaro was a free-lance writer who had been working on a story involving alleged links between various Washington "scandals" of the 1980s, including INSLAW, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), the "October Surprise," the Iran-Contra affair, the Iraqi arms procurement network, and the collapse of the savings and loan industry. Mr. Casolaro's theory was that these scandals had all been the handiwork of a shadowy group of people whom he referred to as the "Octopus." Casolaro began working on the story full-time in mid 1990.

On Saturday, August 10, 1991, Mr. Casolaro was found dead in Room 517 of the Sheraton Inn located in Martinsburg, West Virginia. His body was in the bathtub, and both of his wrists had been slashed. After a brief investigation at the scene, the local police department and the county coroner concluded that the cause of death was suicide. The coroner released the body to a local funeral home, where the body was embalmed. The Martinsburg Police Department sent a teletype to the Fairfax County Police Department in Northern Virginia requesting that Mr. Casolaro's relatives be notified of his death.

Mr. Casolaro's relatives, however, were not notified until Monday morning, August 12, 1991. His brother, a Fairfax County physician, told the Martinsburg Police at that time about Mr. Casolaro's work on the "Octopus" story and suggested that many people would have had a motive to kill him. He explained that

Mr. Casolaro had told people he was travelling to Martinsburg to meet a key source. He also insisted that an autopsy be conducted and questioned how Mr. Casolaro's body could have been embalmed so quickly, without either the knowledge or consent of Mr. Casolaro's family. Soon after the call from Mr. Casolaro's brother, the Martinsburg Police Department was deluged with inquiries from the news media, from friends of Mr. Casolaro and from congressional investigators. A series ~~of questions were raised about the cause and circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death.~~

Faced with this sudden and intense public interest in the case, the West Virginia authorities ordered an autopsy. The West Virginia Deputy Chief Medical Examiner performed the autopsy on ~~Tuesday,~~ August 13, 14 1991, and determined the cause of death as suicide. The autopsy also disclosed that Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis and arteriosclerosis. The autopsy found no evidence suggesting that he had been murdered.

The autopsy findings, however, did little to quell the controversy over Casolaro's death. The media and others raised many questions about the circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death and the adequacy of both the police investigation and the autopsy. Many suggested that Casolaro had been murdered because he was about to expose the "truth" about the "Octopus." Various theories appeared in the media about "who killed Danny Casolaro."

Faced with these continuing questions about its investigation, the Martinsburg Police Department reopened the case and conducted a second, more intensive investigation. On

January 25, 1992, West Virginia authorities announced that their additional investigation had led to the conclusion that Mr. Casolaro indeed had committed suicide, and that the case was closed.

Rumors and speculation continued to circulate despite the conclusions reached by the Martinsburg police. On September 10, 1992, the House Committee on the Judiciary issued their report on the INSLAW affair. The report raised many questions about the circumstances of Mr. Casolaro's death and recommended the appointment of an Independent Counsel to investigate six specific issues involving INSLAW, including "the lingering doubts over certain suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Daniel Casolaro."

After reviewing the Martinsburg Police Department's investigation of Mr. Casolaro's death, the Special Counsel concluded that there was no basis for challenging the conclusion that he had committed suicide. (Bua Report 246-250.) In their rebuttal, INSLAW was highly critical of the Special Counsel's review of this matter and was particularly critical of the Special Counsel's failure to interview certain witnesses.

In light of the intense media focus and the concerns raised by the House Judiciary Committee, we undertook a substantial review and investigation ~~of the~~ circumstances surrounding Mr. Casolaro's death. Based on that review and investigation, we conclude that there is no evidence indicating that Mr. Casolaro was the victim of a homicide. Furthermore, the evidence is

consistent with the findings of the Martinsburg Police Department that he took his own life.

A. Scope of Review

Our review consisted of two ~~basic~~ phases. During the first phase, we reviewed in detail the West Virginia investigations into Mr. Casolaro's death. We reviewed all the police reports and the autopsy report as well as the documents generated during an unsuccessful lawsuit the Casolaro family filed against the coroner and the funeral home regarding the embalming of Casolaro's body. Included among those documents were the sworn depositions, taken by the Casolaro family's attorneys, of the coroner and funeral home personnel. We also interviewed the police officers involved in the investigation of Mr. Casolaro's death as well as the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner who had conducted the autopsy.

During the second phase of the review, we pursued various leads that had been raised in the media and in the House Judiciary Committee Report and attempted to answer other questions raised by Casolaro's family. During this phase, we conducted numerous interviews of Casolaro's friends, family and associates in Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland and California. We obtained documents from various sources throughout the United States, including many of Mr. Casolaro's personal papers on file at the Investigative Reporters' and Editors' Association at the University of Missouri.

We also obtained much of the physical evidence originally found in the hotel room and elsewhere and had the FBI laboratory conduct additional tests on some of that evidence. We examined Mr. Casolaro's background, and had the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia conduct an equivocal death analysis, or "psychological autopsy." Other experts were consulted as well, including a former President of the National Academy of Forensic Sciences and a George Washington University Law Professor who had previously reviewed the Casolaro autopsy report on behalf of a group of Washington-based journalists.

We also reviewed documents at the Central Intelligence Agency and at FBI headquarters. In addition, we met with the Hamiltons and INSLAW's counsel, received documents and other information from them and followed various leads they provided. Finally, we reviewed all the telephone calls and mail received by the producers of the television program "Unsolved Mysteries," following the airing on March 11, 1993 of a segment about Mr. Casolaro's death.

A. Casolaro's Death

1. Discovery of the Body

What? How did he get there? Not [illegible] This is the problem of starting there in the middle!

Mr. Casolaro was supposed to have checked out from his room, number 517, by 12:00 p.m. on August 10, 1991. At about 12:59 p.m., Sharon Palmer, the maid assigned to cleaning the fifth floor, knocked on Mr. Casolaro's door and got no answer. She used her passkey to enter the room. She noticed the bathroom

door was halfway open. She looked inside and saw blood on the floor and blood on a towel. She did not go inside the bathroom, but left and called for help. Another maid, Linda Williams, arrived and saw the blood on the bathroom floor, but did not enter the bathroom. Ms. Williams left and returned with hotel employees Barbara Bettinger, David Avella, Sandy Bogert, and Eric Weidman. Mr. Avella called the police.

Minutes later Patrolman Glenn Macher of the Martinsburg City Police Department arrived. He ordered all the hotel employees who had just been inside the room to go the hotel manager's office and wait to be interviewed by other officers. The patrolman then went inside Mr. Casolaro's room. Within minutes, Martinsburg Police Captain Ted Anderson, Detective John McMillen, Patrolmen Shannon Armel and Terry Stanley and paramedics arrived.

2. The Death Scene

a. Casolaro's Body

According to police reports and witnesses we interviewed, Mr. Casolaro's nude body was in the bathtub. The water was bloody and cold. The tub was about half to three-fourths full. Mr. Casolaro was sitting with his feet toward the faucet. He was leaning against the side of the tub with his head slumped over the side. His right arm was hanging over the side of the tub, and his right hand was lying flat on the floor. His left hand was submerged under water, tucked beneath his left thigh. Both of Mr. Casolaro's wrists had cut wounds. The fingernails on the

thumb, forefinger and middle finger of his right hand appeared to have been chewed.

A used shoelace was draped loosely around Casolaro's neck. Another used shoelace was found inside the bathtub. Two white hefty trash bags were floating in the bathtub. A single-edge razor blade was inside the bathtub. An empty can of Milwaukee's Best beer was also inside the tub.

b. The Bathroom

The wrapper from the razor blade was resting against the side of the bathtub. Next to the bathtub, on the bathroom floor, there was a broken drinking glass and a half-full bottle of "Caves Alianca," a Portuguese white wine. There was a bloody towel on the floor next to the tub. There were bloodstains on the tile around the tub, on the bathroom floor and on the toilet seat. Some bloody water had splattered across the small bathroom to the sink area.

There was an ashtray on top of the toilet tank. Three cigarette butts were in the ashtray, and a pack of Carlton cigarettes was on the toilet tank next to the ashtray. The bathroom was later dusted for fingerprints. Two prints removed from the bathroom sink were identified later as Casolaro's left index and left middle fingers.

There was no sign of any struggle having occurred inside the bathroom.

c. The Bedroom

The police inspected the bedroom area. They found no sign of forced entry, no sign of any struggle inside the room, and no sign that anyone else had been inside the room. The door to the adjoining room (Room 515, occupied by two visitors from Pennsylvania who had come to Martinsburg for a soccer tournament, a 72-year old woman and 70 year-old man) was locked, and the safety chain was secure. The bedspread was partially turned down, but the sheets were not turned down. There was no blood in any part of the hotel room other than the bathroom.

Mr. Casolaro's clothes were laid out on top of the bed. None of the fixtures in the room had been broken or knocked over. Mr. Casolaro's personal effects appeared to be intact. His wallet and driver's license were found inside his coat pocket. There was no sign that anyone had gone through any of Mr. Casolaro's belongings. The police described the scene as "quiet."

There was an unused ashtray inside the bedroom. It had a fingerprint on the bottom, but the police were unable to identify that fingerprint. The trash can inside the bedroom contained a "Sheetz" convenience store coffee cup. On top of it were five empty cans of Milwaukee's Best beer. The police later conducted hair and fiber analyses on various items recovered in the room, but no evidence was developed indicating that anyone other than Mr. Casolaro had been inside the room before he died.

The police found a large black tote back in the bedroom. Inside the bag were, among other items, an empty bottle of

Vicodin pills (which the police later determined had been prescribed for relief of pain following oral surgery performed on ~~Mr.~~ Casolaro in 1988); one box of Hefty trash bags (with two bags missing); two green lawn-type garbage bags; one unopened bottle of "Caves Alianca" white wine; one corkscrew; and three packs of Carlton cigarettes.

The police found, on the coffee table, a box of razor blades with four unused single-edge blades inside. The box had room for five blades. The blades matched the single blade found inside the tub.

The police did not find a briefcase or any documents in the hotel room. They did find various credit card receipts, including two receipts from the nearby Stone Crab Inn for Thursday, August 8 and Friday, August 9.

d. <u>The Suicide Note</u>

The police also found a suicide note, written on the fourth page of a legal pad sitting on the coffee table, next to the box of razor blades. The top three pages in the pad were blank and had been folded over the top and underneath the back of the legal pad. The note said:

> To my loved ones, Please forgive me -- most especially my son -- and be understanding, God will let me in.

(A copy of the note appears as Appendix 1 to this report). The police later determined through handwriting and ink comparisons that Mr. Casolaro wrote the note with a pen that was on the

coffee table near the legal pad. His right thumbprint was the only fingerprint found on the legal pad.[1]

e. Casolaro's Car

The police found ~~Mr.~~ Casolaro's car keys and located his car, a 1981 Honda Accord, in the Sheraton hotel parking lot. There was no sign that the car had been broken into or searched. They lifted two of Mr. Casolaro's fingerprints from the driver's side window. They also found a pack of Carlton cigarettes in the car. The car was impounded and sent to a local body shop for safekeeping.

3. Interviews of Hotel Employees

While the patrol officers were examining the hotel room, Captain Anderson and Detective McMillen interviewed the hotel employees who had discovered Casolaro's body. None of the employees, including the maids, had seen anything suspicious that morning. None had seen anyone enter or leave ~~Mr.~~ Casolaro's room. The last employee who saw Casolaro was Barbara Bettinger, who had talked with him outside his room Friday afternoon.

4. The Coroner's Investigation

Thirty minutes after the police arrived, Berkeley County coroner Sandra Brining and her husband, Martinsburg city

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[1] Some have suggested that Casolaro may have been forced to write the suicide note, and that he was leaving a clue by making the note uncharacteristically brief and by the reference to God "letting him in." Proponents of this theory note that as a Catholic, Casolaro would have known that suicide was a sin, so he must have used that phrase to tip his friends that he was not dying voluntarily. We uncovered no evidence supporting this theory.

paramedic David Brining, entered Room 517. Mr. Brining photographed Mr. Casolaro's body and the bathroom area. Ms. Brining examined the body. According to her records, she noted eight cuts on the underside of Casolaro's left wrist and four cuts on the underside of his right wrist. There was also a bruise on the inner part of the upper left arm. There were no other visible signs of trauma to the body. "Light" rigor mortis was present in both arms. ~~Rigor~~ Livor mortis was present, but had not yet set, in the buttocks, neck, face, arms and legs.

During Ms. Brining's examination of the body, the bloody bathtub water was drained. Ms. Brining failed to preserve a sample of the water.

Ms. Brining classified the death as a suicide, and contacted Brown's Funeral Home in Martinsburg to transport the body. Funeral home employees John Arvin and Robert Fields arrived at Room 517 shortly before 2:00 p.m. The bathroom door was removed to allow room for the body to be taken out of the room. The body was placed in an ambulance and taken to Brown's Funeral Home in Martinsburg.

5. <u>Handling of Death Scene Following Removal of Body</u>

After the body was removed, the Martinsburg police locked the room but ~~failed~~ did not formally seal it.

On Monday morning, Detectives Catlett and McMillen returned to Room 517 to conduct a further investigation after Casolaro's family had alerted them about Mr. Casolaro's work and the threats he had allegedly received. Although the police had not

officially sealed the room when they left Saturday afternoon, the hotel manager, Sam Floyd, had kept the room locked for the remainder of Saturday and all day Sunday. Detective McMillen told us that the hotel room was in exactly the same condition as it had been when he and the other officers left it Saturday. The room had not been cleaned. According to the detective, nothing had been rearranged or disturbed. There was no sign that anyone had been inside the room.

6. Examination and Embalming of the Body at the Funeral Home

Ms. Brining spent two hours examining Mr. Casolaro's body at the funeral home on Saturday afternoon. Patrolman Armel arrived at Brown's Funeral Home at approximately 3:30 p.m., after the examination had started. He watched as funeral home employee Robert Fields drew a blood sample directly from Casolaro's heart. Ms. Brining and Mr. Fields asked Patrolman Armel to notify ~~Mr.~~ Casolaro's next-of-kin. Patrolman Armel relayed that request to Detective McMillen, who had returned to the station.

Patrolman Armel asked Ms. Brining for the cause of death, and she said that Mr. Casolaro had bled to death. She determined that the wounds to the wrists had been self-inflicted, and that the manner of death was suicide.

As Ms. Brining and Patrolman Armel were preparing to leave, Charles Brown, the owner of Brown's Funeral Home, asked Ms. Brining if the body could be embalmed. Ms. Brining said that she was releasing the body to the funeral home, that an autopsy would

not be conducted because the death was a suicide, and that the body could be embalmed. Mr. Fields then embalmed the body.

A great deal of controversy has centered on the decision by Martinsburg officials to embalm the body prior to both an autopsy and notification of Casolaro's family. We do not believe that the decision to forego an autopsy and embalm Mr. Casolaro's body was unreasonable in light of the physical evidence indicating that Mr. Casolaro had committed suicide. However, we are concerned by the decision -- in violation of state law -- to embalm the body before a reasonable effort had been made to contact Mr. Casolaro's family. Under West Virginia law, a deceased's body may not be embalmed unless the authorities have first made "due inquiry" as to the desires of the next of kin. West Virginia Code Ann. § 30-6-8 (1993). If Mr. Casolaro's family had been properly contacted on August 10, they would have undoubtedly raised the same concerns and fears that they raised two days later when they were actually notified of Mr. Casolaro's death. If that had happened, we believe the Martinsburg authorities would have conducted an autopsy before the body was embalmed. Much of the controversy and speculation concerning the handling of the investigation by Martinsburg authorities would, thus, have been avoided.

However, we are unaware of any evidence which suggests that the decision by Ms. Brining approving the embalming of the body

was made to further any type of cover-up or conspiracy.[2] In fact, the decision appears to be consistent with the custom and practice in the Martinsburg area. During a lawsuit filed by Casolaro's family against Brown's Funeral Home, Berkeley County, and the City of Martinsburg, an attorney for Casolaro's family took the sworn depositions Mr. Brown. In his deposition, Mr. Brown testified that "courtesy embalmings" are standard procedure in Martinsburg for decedents from Washington, D.C. (Casolaro, et al., v. Brown Funeral Home, et al., No. 92-C-721, Circuit Court for Berkeley County, W. Va., Deposition of Charles Brown, Sept. 13, 1993, at 27, 35.)

Furthermore, the embalming of the body did not have the severe impact on the subsequent autopsy that was performed as has been speculated. Embalming typically precludes the ability to obtain accurate toxicological studies of bodily fluids. Here, however, the embalming did not interfere with the autopsy, as the medical examiner and toxicologist had access to four separate bodily fluid samples and organs that had been unaffected by the embalming: (1) the blood sample that Mr. Fields had taken directly from Casolaro's heart, before the embalming had been

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[2] The media has reported that Ms. Brining and Mr. Brown had a dispute over whether she had authorized him to embalm Casolaro's body. Our investigation found that they both agreed that she did authorize the embalming. In her deposition during a suit filed by the Casolaro family, Ms. Brining testified that, as she was leaving the funeral home, she told Mr. Brown that "the body is released." (Deposition of Sandra Brining, Jan. 14, 1993 at 92). Mr. Brown then asked whether the body could be embalmed, and Ms. Brining said yes. Mr. Brown confirmed Ms. Brining's recollection.

performed; (2) a small amount of urine that had not been evacuated at the time of death because of the submersion of Casolaro's body in the bath water, and that had not been tainted due to Mr. Fields' failure to inject embalming fluid into the bladder; (3) a small amount of vitreous fluid from behind the eye sockets; and (4) the liver, which Mr. Fields had entirely missed when he failed to insert the trocar (embalming tool) into that organ.

7. Notification of Next-of-Kin

At 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 10, Detective McMillen called the Fairfax County (Virginia) Police Department and notified them of Mr. Casolaro's name, address, and apparent suicide. He requested that the Fairfax Police Department notify Mr. Casolaro's family. The Fairfax police said they could not do so unless they were notified by teletype. At 4:00 p.m., Detective McMillen sent the requested teletype but received no acknowledgement. A few minutes later he sent a second teletype.

According to police records, a Fairfax County patrol car drove to Mr. Casolaro's house at approximately 4:30 p.m. The officer knocked. When no one answered, the officer left his business card on Casolaro's door. The officer returned to the station and called Detective McMillen at 5:00 p.m. Detective McMillen asked the officer to attempt to notify Casolaro's next-of-kin and to ask them to contact the Martinsburg police to provide instructions regarding funeral arrangements.

Inexplicably, the Fairfax County police made no effort to locate any of Mr. Casolaro's relatives, other than going to his house and leaving a business card. ~~As Mr. Casolaro's brother and mother told us,~~ Fairfax police would have found the name of Tony Casolaro in the local phone book if they had looked. The anguish which was ultimately caused by the belated notification could easily have been and should have been avoided.

Finally, on Monday, August 12, the Martinsburg police authorities did what the Fairfax police department should have done two days earlier. Detective Sergeant Swartwood called directory assistance for Fairfax County, received the listing for Dr. Tony Casolaro and called the number. Mr. Casolaro's mother was at Dr. Casolaro's house and answered the phone. Detective Sergeant Swartwood notified Mrs. Casolaro of her son's death at that time.

B. <u>The Autopsy</u>

Shortly after Mr. Casolaro's family was notified of his death, Dr. Tony Casolaro informed West Virginia authorities that his brother had been working on a sensitive story and that he had received death threats. ~~According to Dr.~~ Casolaro, ~~he~~ urged the police to conduct an autopsy. Detective Sergeant Swartwood relayed this information to Ms. Brining who agreed to contact the West Virginia Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Dr. James L. Frost, to arrange for an autopsy. Casolaro's body was moved to Morgantown, West Virginia on Tuesday, August 13, 1991. That afternoon, Dr. Frost conducted preliminary and fluoroscopic

No need for attribution when urgent guy.

examinations of the body. The results were negative. The next morning, August 14, 1991, Ms. Brining, Patrolman Armel, and Patrolman Stambaugh traveled to Morgantown to observe the autopsy.

The summary of the findings of the autopsy which follows is based on a review of the autopsy report and interviews of Dr. Frost and others who were involved with or observed the autopsy. The examination undertaken by Dr. Frost focused largely on the cuts found on Mr. Casolaro's wrists and the possibility that there was some other cause or contributing cause to his death.

Dr. Frost spent a considerable amount of time examining Mr. Casolaro's wrists. The undersides of both wrists had deep cuts, though the depth was not extraordinary for a suicide according to Dr. Frost. The angles of the cuts were consistent with the wounds being self-inflicted.

Mr. Casolaro was right handed. There were four cuts on Casolaro's right wrist and eight on his left. According to Dr. Frost, Mr. Casolaro probably made the cuts on his left wrist first. The uppermost cut on the left wrist appeared to be a superficial cut. Dr. Frost told us that the superficial cut on the left wrist was not consistent with a so-called "hesitation cut," something that certain forensic pathologists look for in suicide cases. In Dr. Frost's view, the lack of a hesitation cut could be cited as evidence that the victim was particularly determined to commit suicide.

The autopsy revealed that Mr. Casolaro injured one of the tendons in his left wrist with a particularly deep cut. However, that injury would not deprive him of the motor ability in his left hand to grasp the razor and cut his right wrist. According to Dr. Frost, that is exactly what he did. The other cuts were also deep, but not so deep as to have been especially suspicious to Dr. Frost.

The autopsy found no indications that Mr. Casolaro had been involved in a struggle. Three of the fingernails on his right hand had been chewed. Mr. Casolaro's brother, Dr. Tony Casolaro, told us that his brother did not bite his nails. However, the autopsy uncovered no evidence that anyone else bit his nails or that he had bitten the nails during a struggle in the hotel room. There was also a faint contusion on Mr. Casolaro's left anterior bicep. Dr. Frost determined that the bruise was probably caused two days before Mr. Casolaro's death. There were other faint blue marks and contusions on the body, but those were determined to be postmortem skin discolorations caused by the embalming process.

Dr. Frost also noted during the autopsy that Mr. Casolaro's tongue was normal, indicating that Casolaro did not appear to have ingested any foreign substance. There was no indication of force having been applied to his mouth or lips. There was no sign of choking, strangulation, or drowning. No water was found in Mr. Casolaro's lungs.

Casolaro's brain was removed and taken to the pathology laboratory for analysis. The neuropathologist, Dr. Sydney S. Schochet, examined the brain and determined that Mr. Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis. Dr. Schochet opined that Casolaro had been experiencing vision problems. In addition to the finding that Mr. Casolaro was suffering from multiple sclerosis, the autopsy also revealed that Casolaro had "moderately severe" arteriosclerosis.

Dr. Frost determined that the cause of Mr. Casolaro's death was "exsanguinating hemorrhage from multiple incised wounds to the wrists." He concluded that the manner of death was suicide. He estimated that the time of death was between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 10, 1991. Dr. Frost told us that Mr. Casolaro probably lost consciousness within five to eight minutes of cutting himself and that he likely died within 15 minutes.

Dr. Frost also submitted the blood sample that had previously been taken from the heart as well as urine, liver and vitreous fluids which he found during the autopsy and which had not been tainted by the embalming fluids to the West Virginia toxicology laboratory for analysis. The results of the toxicology studies did not alter Dr. Frost's conclusions as to the cause and manner of death. Rather they were fully consistent with suicide.

According to Dr. Cash, the toxicologist, the results of the toxicology tests are reliable, notwithstanding the embalming of

the body, because the autopsy revealed four separate bodily fluid and organ samples that had not been tainted by the embalming process. He used those samples for his analysis.

The toxicology tests revealed several things. First, Mr. Casolaro had a an alcohol content of .04 in his urine. According to Dr. Cash, that alcohol level is consistent with the metabolization rate for a man of his height and weight consuming the six beers found in the hotel room as well as some of the white wine during the night and early morning hours before his death. No alcohol was found in the blood sample taken from the heart. Second, trace amounts of the chemical components for Vicodin were found in some of the samples. As indicated above, an empty bottle of Vicodin was found in Mr. Casolaro's luggage in the hotel room. And third, trace amounts of a tricyclic anti-depressant medication were also present. The tricyclic was never traced, and we were unable to determine its origins. However, the amount was insignificant. Dr. Cash conducted a series of tests for the presence of a variety of "exotic" drugs or any other substances that could have been used to render Mr. Casolaro unconscious or that could have contributed to his death. All those tests were negative.

Dr. Cash also tested the wine found in the open bottle adjacent to the bathtub for the presence of any drugs. That test was also negative.[3]

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[3] Several months after the autopsy was conducted, a group of journalists in Washington, D.C. asked Professor James E. Starrs, a noted forensic pathology expert at the George

C. Additional Police Investigation

After learning from Dr. Casolaro and others about the nature of Mr. Casolaro's work and the threats that had been allegedly directed at him, the Martinsburg police began a more substantial investigation into the matter. We carefully reviewed the records of that investigation and conclude that it was sufficient given the nature of the allegations. Furthermore, we concur with the conclusion reached by the Martinsburg Police Department that the results of that investigation support the conclusion that Mr. Casolaro took his own life.

The following is a summary of some of the important findings of that investigation:

- The police located and interviewed the occupants of rooms 514, 515, 516, 519 and 520 on the night of August 9-10, 1991. None of the individuals staying in those rooms recall hearing any unusual noises coming from room 517, Mr. Casolaro's room, either that evening or the next morning. Nor did any of them recall seeing anyone entering or leaving room 517 during the morning of August 10.

Washington University law school, to review Dr. Frost's autopsy report. Professor Starrs agreed to do so. In an interview with the Washington Business Journal (week of Nov. 9-15, 1992, p. 13), Professor Starrs stated that he agreed with Dr. Frost that Mr. Casolaro's wounds had been self-inflicted. He also stated that he doubted whether any additional scientific techniques would have changed the outcome of the autopsy. Professor Starrs agreed with Dr. Frost that the small contusions on Casolaro's body were caused by the embalming fluid, although he criticized the West Virginia authorities for embalming the body so quickly. Professor Starrs also noted that the suicide note was typical, in that it was unsigned and made apologies to Casolaro's family. Professor Starrs summarized his view of the case by saying, "[I]f this was a homicide, it would be the most singularly remarkable murder on record, either in fiction or nonfiction."

- The occupant of room 519, Michael Looney of St. Paul, Minnesota, had had several drinks with Mr. Casolaro on Thursday, August 8. Police noticed during the interview that Mr. Looney's wrist was bandaged. Mr. Looney told the police officers conducting the interview that he had hurt himself playing volleyball. The officers were able to verify that story.

- During the interviewing of all of the hotel employees who may have had contact with Mr. Casolaro, a front desk employee told the police that Mr. Casolaro may have had a brown briefcase when he checked into the hotel. No other hotel employee recalled seeing Mr. Casolaro with a briefcase. Police were unable to locate any briefcase during searches of Mr. Casolaro's hotel room, his car, the hotel or the area surrounding the hotel.

- The hotel manager stated that there were six keys for room 517. One key was found in the room among Mr. Casolaro's belongings during the initial search of the room on August 10. The remaining five keys were found at the front desk.

- The razor blades found in the bathtub and in the bedroom were manufactured by Techni-Edge Manufacturing Corporation in New Jersey. Although they checked several retail outlets in the Martinsburg and Fairfax County areas, the Martinsburg police were unable to determine where the blades had been purchased. The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory was unable to lift any fingerprints from the blade found in the bathtub because it had been immersed in water. (We asked the FBI laboratory to attempt to lift a fingerprint from the blade, but they too were unable to do so.)

- On August 21, 1991, during a search of Mr. Casolaro's home, police found two unopened bottles of "Caves Alianca" white wine under the kitchen sink. The bottles matched those found in the bathroom of the hotel room and in Casolaro's luggage. The Martinsburg police determined that the Giant Supermarket chain in Northern Virginia sells Caves Alianca wine. The brand is unavailable in West Virginia.

- During their search of Mr. Casolaro's house, the police found two tennis shoes from two different pairs -- one Nike and one Reebok -- that were each missing a shoelace. The shoes were in the closet in the upstairs bedroom. The police asked the West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory to attempt to match the two

laces found at the death scene with the two shoes from Mr. Casolaro's house. The crime laboratory was unable to make a definite match, although a visual comparison of the laces and the shoes seemed to indicate that the eyelet marks on the laces matched the eyelets on the shoes. (We had the FBI laboratory conduct a variety of tests on the laces and the shoes to attempt to match them, but the results were inconclusive.)

- On August 29, 1991, and on September 27, 1991, the Martinsburg police received copies of a passport photo of an Arab named Hassan Ali Ibrahim Ali. This may have been the same photograph that Mr. Casolaro had shown to Ben Mason in his basement office on Wednesday, August 7 (See discussion below). There is no evidence that Mr. Casolaro ever met Ibrahim, or that Ibrahim -- whoever he is -- had anything to do with Casolaro's death.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the blood stains found in the bathroom in Room 517 matched Mr. Casolaro's blood.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the handwriting on the suicide note matched Casolaro's known handwriting. The ink used to write the note matched the ink found next to the suicide note. Mr. Casolaro's right thumbprint was found on the legal pad containing the suicide note.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that Casolaro's fingerprints matched those lifted from the bathroom sink. The fingerprint found on the bottom on the unused ashtray in the hotel bedroom could not be identified.

- The West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory determined that the wine found in the open "Caves Alianca" bottle on the bathroom floor was untainted, as were the wine traces on the broken drinking glass on the bathroom floor.

In addition, in December 1991, the Martinsburg police and the Berkeley County District Attorney asked Dr. Henry C. Lee, the Chief Criminalist at the Connecticut State Crime Laboratory and a nationally recognized blood splatter expert, to conduct a blood spatter analysis of the bathroom where the body had been found.

The Martinsburg police provided Dr. Lee with the death scene photographs, as well as a videotaped reenactment of the death the police had prepared with Dr. Frost's assistance on December 12, 1991 in the exact room where Mr. Casolaro had died. After reviewing Dr. Frost's autopsy report and other evidence, Dr. Lee created a three-dimensional photographic montage from the photographs taken of Casolaro's body and the bathroom on August 10, 1991. Dr. Lee issued his report on January 24, 1992.

Based on the pattern of the blood found in the bathroom, Dr. Lee theorized that Mr. Casolaro filled the tub with an amount of water; poured himself a drink of wine, and sat the glass on the side of the bathtub; sat down on the side of the bathtub; cut his wrists with the razor blade; and then sat inside the tub. Mr. Casolaro then probably got into the bathtub and placed one of the white hefty bags over his head as added insurance that he would die. (According to Ann Klenk, Mr. Casolaro had discussed with her several months before his death how the author Jerzy Kozinski had committed suicide in a bathtub by tying a plastic bag over his head.)

Dr. Lee theorized that Mr. Casolaro next submerged his wrists into the water and bled into the water for a few moments. According to Dr. Lee, he probably became extremely uncomfortable with the bag over his head and pulled it off, flinging bloody water across the floor and to the sink opposite the bathtub. Mr. Casolaro then attempted to stand up in the tub, bracing himself against the tile wall. By that time, however, he had lost too

much blood. According to Dr. Lee, he probably become woozy and slumped back into the tub, causing bloody water to slosh over the side of the tub and onto the bathroom floor. As he fell back down into the tub, Casolaro's arm knocked the drinking glass onto the floor, where it broke. His right arm hung outside the tub as he slumped against the side of the tub. His head came to rest on the side of the tub.

Dr. Lee concluded that the blood spatter analysis he had conducted established that Casolaro's death was "not inconsistent with a suicide."

The police also reviewed Mr. Casolaro's financial condition. They were unable to find any evidence that he had earned any income during the months before he died. When the Martinsburg police searched his house, they found his checkbook and checking account statements. The documents indicated that Mr. Casolaro had been receiving loans from family members every two or three months.

The police also found a copy of the ~~mortgage~~ mortgage note loan agreement for Mr. Casolaro's house. The note indicated that a balloon payment of $178,790 was due August 9, 1991. The police checked with the mortgage company and learned that Mr. Casolaro had received a 30-day extension, to September 8, 1991, on the payment. The police also found Casolaro's July 1991 phone bill, in the amount of $922.00.

The Martinsburg police officially concluded their investigation on January 25, 1992, after expending over 1,000

had nothing to do w/ police

aggregate hours on the case. We believe that the vast majority of the criticisms directed at that investigation are not warranted. In our opinion, the Martinsburg City Police Department ~~generally~~ conducted a thorough, professional investigation. Although some mistakes were made during the investigation (particularly the embalming of the body and the failure to seal the room), it does not appear that those mistakes had any significant adverse effect on the investigation. We also believe that Dr. Frost, Dr. Cash, and Dr. Schochet performed an excellent autopsy, toxicology, and neuropathology study.

INSLAW has not provided any evidence supporting this theory, and it appears to be merely conjecture on its part.

III. Our Investigation

A. "The Octopus"

During our investigation into Mr. Casolaro's death, it became clear that many of the sources for Mr. Casolaro's theories about the government's involvement with INSLAW were the same as those identified by the Hamiltons, though Mr. Casolaro's theory of "the Octopus" involved an even more far-flung conspiracy than that advanced by INSLAW. In a November 1990 book proposal he provided to Herb Karlitz, a New York literary agent, he described the conspirators as follows:

> An international cabal whose freelance services cover parochial political intrigue, espionage, sophisticated weapon technologies that include biotoxins, drug trafficking, money laundering and murder-for-hire has emerged from an isolated desert Indian reservation just north of Mexicali. . . . I propose a series of articles and a book, a true crime narrative, that unravels this web of thugs and thieves who roam the earth with their

weapons and their murders, trading dope and dirty money for the secrets of the temple.

At various times, the Octopus theory linked the INSLAW matter, the alleged connection of the Cabazon Indian reservation with international arms dealing, the assassination of "super gun" inventor Gerald Bull, the suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon, the BCCI scandal, the Iran Contra affair, the Iraqui arms procurement network, the collapse of the savings and loan industry and other matters.

Mr. Casolaro apparently first learned about INSLAW's dispute with the Justice Department in mid-1990 when Terry Miller, a friend, told him about the dispute and encouraged him to talk to the Hamiltons. By everyone's account, Mr. Casolaro became obsessed with the INSLAW story and the web of conspiracy allegations associated with it over the next few months. Mr. Casolaro soon began to develop his Octopus theory whereby the INSLAW affair was merely one arm of an octopus that had been engaged in international intrigue since the early 1950s.

During the period from mid-1990 to his death, Mr. Casolaro took hundreds of pages of notes during his telephone calls with the Hamiltons and others. Mr. Casolaro's close friend Ann Klenk found his notes in the basement office of his house the day his death was disclosed. Ms. Klenk provided the notes to Tara Sonenshine, a producer for ABC's Nightline program. Ms. Sonenshine examined the notes, and told Ms. Klenk that the notes did not appear to contain any clues about Mr. Casolaro's death. Several other journalists looked at the notes and arrived at the

same conclusion. Ms. Klenk had the notes sent to the Investigative Reporters' and Editors' Association (IRE) at the University of Missouri, where they were catalogued and archived. We obtained a complete set of the notes from IRE. We also obtained copies of certain pages that Ms. Klenk had kept.

We have carefully examined the notes, consisting of several hundred pages. The notes are filled with names, places, phone numbers, diagrams, and references to various international intrigues, including arms dealing, drug trafficking, chemical warfare, money laundering, terrorism, and political assassinations. Some of the notes appear to have been taken during telephone conversations with various people, while other notes appear to reflect information obtained from newspaper articles and magazines.

Finally, those notes indicate that Mr. Casolaro spent a considerable amount of time receiving and soliciting information from many of the same sources relied on by INSLAW: Michael Riconosciuto, Charles Hayes, Robert Booth Nichols, and others. Although we discuss some of the information these individuals allege with regard to Mr. Casolaro's death in later parts of this report, it should be noted that none of the information they provided to Mr. Casolaro affects our conclusions with regard to the underlying conspiracy allegations.

B. <u>August 5-10, 1991</u>

We spent a significant amount of time trying to reconstruct the last week of Mr. Casolaro's life in the hope that such a

reconstruction might lead to some answers about his death. The following reconstruction is based on numerous interviews, documentary evidence and police records.

Monday, August 5, 1991

On Monday, August 5, Mr. Casolaro saw his brother Tony during the day. Dr. Casolaro told us that he told his brother that he looked tired. Later that day, Ann Klenk saw Mr. Casolaro's car parked outside a bar at a local shopping center. According to Ms. Klenk, she went inside and saw Mr. Casolaro, head slumped down, sitting at the bar. She said that Mr. Casolaro "looked terrible." He told her in a tone that Ms. Klenk described as disgust: "I just broke INSLAW. Bill Hamilton's going to be real excited." Mr. Casolaro then told Ms. Klenk, "You can have the story, and if you don't want it, you can give it to Jack Anderson." (Ms. Klenk had once worked as a reporter for syndicated columnist Jack Anderson). Finally, Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk he had "just gotten back" from West Virginia and that he was going back again.

Ms. Klenk said she was worried about her friend. She ordered a pizza for him, begged him to eat something and left.

Tuesday, August 6, 1991

On Tuesday, August 6, Mr. Casolaro again spoke to Ms. Klenk, and discussed the "Octopus" book proposal he had sent to his agent two weeks earlier. Mr. Casolaro also had two phone calls that day with John Elvin, a journalist friend in Annapolis. According to Mr. Elvin, Mr. Casolaro asked him during those two

calls to review the "stuff" he had sent him. Mr. Casolaro mentioned that he was going to West Virginia and said he would call Mr. Elvin when he returned.

Casolaro also called his friend Jim Pittaway that day and told him that he was going to West Virginia to meet someone, but that he did not know that person's identity.

During the day, he spent sometime packing a suitcase. According to Olga Mokros, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor and housekeeper, Mr. Casolaro told her while she was helping him pack that he would not be seeing his son again. Ms. Mokros also told us that he took her into his basement office and showed her where he kept his will.

That evening, Mr. Casolaro had dinner at the home of Larry Stich, a former IBM attorney he had known for several years. Mr. Stich told us that Mr. Casolaro did not seem depressed to him. Mr. Stich recalls his friend telling him that evening that he was going to meet with "somebody" regarding his book project.

After returning home, Casolaro called Robert Booth Nichols at his home in Los Angeles, speaking to him from 1:40 a.m. until 2:46 a.m. EST. Mr. Booth Nichols told us that he remembers Mr. Casolaro mentioning that he was planning a trip to the Cabazon Indian Reservation in Southern California where he would "wrap up" his research. According to Mr. Booth Nichols, Mr. Casolaro sounded confident and not depressed.

<u>Wednesday, August 7, 1991</u>

On Wednesday, August 7, Ben Mason, a close friend, came over to Mr. Casolaro's house to visit. Mr. Mason told us that Mr. Casolaro was in an "exuberant" mood that day. Mr. Casolaro showed Mason some papers in his basement office and told him that the papers were in a specific order. Mr. Mason recalls seeing a photocopy of a passport photo of a young man named "Ibrahim."

While Mr. Mason was still there, Mr. Casolaro received a call from Ann Weinfield and her husband. They were leaving Washington to spend a few days at their beach house, and they customarily called Mr. Casolaro to say goodbye whenever they left town. Both Mrs. Weinfield and her husband spoke with Mr. Casolaro. They both recall that during the conversation Mrs. Weinfield told her husband that something was "definitely wrong" with their friend. Mrs. Weinfield told us that Mr. Casolaro rambled incoherently and seemed to have lost touch with reality.

Mr. Casolaro also spoke with his cousin, Dr. Louis Petrillo, a New York psychologist, that day. In a letter written ten days later, Dr. Petrillo wrote that Mr. Casolaro sounded "enthusiastic" on the phone, saying that he was "looking forward to meeting with a 'source.'" Dr. Petrillo noted in that letter that he had spoken frequently with his cousin during the months before his death, and that, in his judgment, he had not manifested "any symptoms or character traits . . . that could, in any way be associated with a potential for suicide."[4]

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[4] We spoke with Dr. Petrillo more recently. He recalled the August 7, 1991 telephone call. With the benefit of hindsight, Dr. Petrillo now believes that Mr. Casolaro could very

That evening Mr. Casolaro and Ben Mason went out. Mr. Casolaro met a woman while they were at a hotel bar. At 2:00 a.m., after taking Mr. Mason home, he returned to the hotel and called the woman he had just met from the lobby phone to see if she would invite him to her room. She said no, and he returned home.

Thursday, August 8, 1991

According to Mr. Mason, Mr. Casolaro called him at 6:00 a.m. and told him of his failed attempt to rejoin the woman at the hotel. Mr. Casolaro laughed off the incident and told his friend he was going to West Virginia "to see the guys."

At about 10:00 a.m., Mr. Casolaro went to the office of his insurance agent, J.J. Kelly, Jr. Mr. Casolaro paid the premium for his homeowner's insurance to the Nationwide Mutual Fire Insurance Company. While he was at his agent's office, he called Danielle Stallings, his friend and real estate agent. Ms. Stallings told us that Mr. Casolaro mentioned that he wanted her to arrange a meeting for the following week with an acquaintance of hers whose mother-in-law was knowledgeable about the Phillipines. As he was leaving Mr. Kelly's office, Mr. Casolaro asked Mrs. Kelly for direction to Interstate 66 - West, a common route from Northern Virginia to West Virginia.

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well have committed suicide. He stated that he was prepared to change the conclusions expressed in his August 17, 1991 letter based on what he now knew about the physical evidence and other circumstances surrounding Mr. Casolaro's death.

It appears that Mr. Casolaro then drove to Martinsburg, West Virginia, and checked into the Sheraton Inn. The desk clerk, James Lopez, recalled that Casolaro checked in between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. He had a reservation and gave Mr. Lopez a credit card. Mr. Lopez gave Mr. Casolaro one key to Room 517. According to Mr. Lopez, Mr. Casolaro told him that he was not going to open the room right away because he was late for an appointment at the Stone Crab Inn, a restaurant and bar not far from the Sheraton. Mr. Lopez said he thought Mr. Casolaro had an old, "beat up" brief case with him, but he was not sure.

The bartender working at the Stone Crab Inn that day, Tom Haches, recalls that Casolaro arrived at about 12:30 p.m.[5] Mr. Haches, who had previously worked at the Sheraton Inn, recognized Mr. Casolaro from a prior visit he had apparently made to Martinsburg about a year earlier. Mr. Casolaro told him that he was going to be meeting with "some Arabs" at about 1:00 p.m. According to the bartender, no one arrived. At about 1:20 p.m. Mr. Casolaro asked Mr. Haches for four quarters. He went outside and returned a few minutes later. There are both cigarette machines and a public phone outside the Stone Crab Inn.

Mr. Casolaro had a bottle of wine and a draft beer that afternoon at the Stone Crab Inn. He spoke with another man at the bar about a vineyard the man owned. Mr. Casolaro charged

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[5] Although this is inconsistent with Mr. Lopez's recollection that Mr. Casolaro checked into the hotel between 1:00 and 2:00, and went to the Stone Crab Inn, we find the discrepancy insignificant.

twenty dollars worth of drinks and tabs on his Mastercard while at the Stone Crab Inn that afternoon.

He left the Stone Crab Inn at about 3:30 p.m., telling the bartender he wanted to go back to his hotel to check for messages and that he might be back later for the happy hour. However, Mr. Casolaro apparently went directly to a Pizza Hut restaurant located near the Sheraton. The waitress working there, a college student named Laura Miller, positively identified him as having arrived at about 3:30 p.m. Ms. Miller said that he ordered a pitcher of beer and a small pizza. He drank the entire pitcher of beer but ate only one or two pieces of the pizza and left the Pizza Hut at about 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Casolaro was next seen at Heatherfield's lounge, located inside the Sheraton Inn. At this point there is a significant discrepancy in the recollections of two witnesses. The bartender, a woman named Lynn Hitrick, who had served Mr. Casolaro on his prior visits to Martinsburg, recalled that he walked into the bar between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. Ms. Hitrick recalled that Mr. Casolaro drank beer by himself until about 6:30, when another hotel guest, Michael Looney, a 3M employee from St. Paul, Minnesota, who was staying in Room 519, sat down at the bar and began talking to him. Ms. Hitrick remembered that Mr. Casolaro started drinking bottled beer, but later switched to draft beer. Mr. Casolaro spoke with Mr. Looney until about 11:30 p.m., when the bar closed. Ms. Hitrick does not recall seeing Mr. Casolaro talking with anyone else that night.

However, the waitress, Kim Waters, told a different story. The police originally met her by chance, when they went to the home of one of the Sheraton desk clerks to interview him three days after Mr. Casolaro's death. She happened to be at the desk clerk's home. When the police showed her Mr. Casolaro's photograph, she said she remembered seeing him in the bar but could not remember anything else. Later that day she contacted the police, saying she had now remembered that Casolaro had arrived at the bar at about 5:10 p.m., and that he sat at a table with another man whom she described as "dark skinned, like maybe Iranian or Arabian." Ms. Waters recalled that both men were drinking draft beer, and that the "Iranian or Arabian" man was drinking very fast and was very insistent that he be served quickly. She claimed to have served four beers each to Mr. Casolaro and the other man. She also said the other man paid for all the beers in cash. Three days later, Ms. Waters helped the police prepare a composite drawing of the "Iranian or Arabian" person. On September 16, 1991, the police interviewed Ms. Waters again. She still stood by her story, but, according to the police report, her recollection seemed hazy and uncertain. No one has been able to determine who the "Iranian or Arabian" person was, if indeed there was such a person.

Ms. Waters' recollection conflicts with Ms. Hitrick's recollection in several important respects. The most important conflicts are with Ms. Hitrick's recollections that (1) Casolaro came into the bar alone; (2) he sat at the bar, not at a table;

(3) he started drinking bottled beer, not draft beer; and (4) he spoke with only one person the entire evening. Ms. Hitrick's recollection is corroborated by Mr. Casolaro's bar tab, which shows that, beginning at 6:00 p.m., Casolaro purchased one bottled beer, then another bottled beer, and then switched to draft beer. Altogether, Casolaro purchased seven beers that evening.

Ms. Hitrick's recollection is also corroborated by Mr. Looney's memory of the evening. Mr. Looney recalled meeting Mr. Casolaro for the first time near the ice machine down the hall from their fifth floor rooms sometime between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. A short while later, he went down to the hotel bar, saw Casolaro drinking alone and joined him. According to Mr. Looney, they spent the rest of the evening talking. Mr. Casolaro told him all about the Octopus project and said he was waiting to meet "some Arabs." Mr. Looney recalled that Mr. Casolaro acted agitated when the "Arabs" failed to show.

It is difficult to determine whose recollection of that evening's events is more accurate. However, given the fact that both Mr. Looney and the credit card records are consistent with Ms. Hitrick's recollection, we are led to believe her recollection is likely to be the more accurate. In any event, the Martinsburg police were unable to locate any individual matching the description provided to them by Ms. Waters, and there is no evidence linking such an individual with Mr. Casolaro's death.

Friday, August 9, 1991

The next day, Friday, August 9, 1991, Mr. Casolaro went to the front desk at the Sheraton at about 12:00 p.m. and told the desk clerk, Mr. Lopez, that he would be staying one more night. At about 1:30 p.m., a hotel maid, Barbara Bettinger, spoke with Mr. Casolaro outside his door. He asked whether the maids could clean his room right then because he had work to do. Another maid, Roxanne Willis, went inside the room and cleaned while he waited outside. Ms. Willis noticed a bottle of wine on the lamp table.

Mr. Casolaro was next seen at the Stone Crab Inn at about 2:30 p.m. He drank beer until about 5:30 p.m. According to the bartender, Pamela Henry, he seemed depressed and lonely and acted as if he wanted to talk to someone. He bought five beers, one shrimp cocktail, and one crabcake sandwich with his credit card. The bartender who worked the 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. shift at the Stone Crab Inn, Raelene Cook, did not see anyone matching Casolaro's description in the bar during her shift that night.

After leaving the Stone Crab Inn, Mr. Casolaro placed a collect call to his mother's house in Fairfax County at about 6:00 p.m. His family had planned a birthday party for his niece that evening. He spoke with his mother and told her he would be late for the party, if he made it at all.

At 7:00 p.m., a group of people from Pennsylvania, who had traveled to Martinsburg for a soccer tournament that weekend, checked into rooms 514, 515, 516 and 520. Mr. Casolaro was

staying in room 517. At about 9:00 p.m., Mary Lehnert, one of the occupants of room 515, saw someone matching Mr. Casolaro's general description enter room 517 with a key. She did not see the person's face, as his back was to her. However, she recalled that he was carrying a brown paper bag.

Shortly after midnight, Mr. Casolaro walked to the Sheetz convenience store across the parking lot from the Sheraton. He asked for coffee, and the clerk, Cindy Noll, brewed a fresh pot for him. Ms. Noll gave Mr. Casolaro a medium coffee and did not charge him because he had to wait for the pot to brew. Both Ms. Noll and another witness in the store at that time, Diane Small, recalled that Mr. Casolaro seemed relaxed, and that he made small talk with them both. When he left they saw him walk back toward the Sheraton.

The above account of Mr. Casolaro's movements on Friday, August 9 is not complete. We have not been able to pinpoint his whereabouts between noon and 1:30 p.m. or between 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. The most likely explanation is that he was in his hotel room during those times.[6]

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[6] After learning of Mr. Casolaro's death, William Turner, one of Mr. Casolaro's sources for the Octopus theory, claimed to have met with him in the Sheraton parking lot on August 9. Mr. Turner has been unclear as to the time of the meeting, placing it anywhere between noon and 6:00 p.m. Although Mr. Turner has consistently asserted that Mr. Casolaro provided him documents at that meeting, he has changed his story with regard to the nature and amount of those documents. Shortly after Mr. Casolaro's death, he told local authorities that Mr. Casolaro had given him a "stack of documents eighteen inches high." However, he told us that Mr. Casolaro had given him three sealed manila envelops containing documents before the August 9 meeting, and that he returned two of those envelopes to Mr. Casolaro during that

Saturday, August 10, 1991

As described above, Mr. Casolaro's body was found at approximately 1:00 p.m. Dr. Frost estimated the time of death as between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m.

C. Mr. Casolaro's State of Mind in August 1991

The most difficult aspect of any investigation involving the possibility of a suicide is the effort to determine why a particular individual might have taken his or her own life. We were mindful of the fact from the very outset that such an endeavor is bound to be unsuccessful. The only individual who might be able to provide the answer to such questions is, by definition, gone. And, in all probability, that person would not be able to provide any more satisfactory answers.

Nevertheless, we felt it to be part of our task to at least address some of those issues. In our investigation, we found

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meeting. He said he kept the third packet in his safe. In any event, no one witnessed the meeting in the hotel's parking lot.

There are significant reasons to discount Mr. Turner's story. First, on September 13, 1991, he pleaded guilty in federal court to one felony count of making a false statement in 1988 to the Veteran's Administration. He was sentenced to 60 days in prison and five years probation. Then, on December 30, 1993, after Mr. Turner had moved to Tennessee, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms searched his home pursuant to a warrant. They found 23 firearms inside, including several with no serial numbers. When we last checked, he was facing probation revocation proceedings in Knoxville.

Finally, local police in Winchester, Virginia searched Mr. Turner's house on September 26, 1991, when he was a suspect in a bank robbery. The search took place six weeks after Mr. Casolaro's death. The only items found in his safe were a passport and some gold coins. There were no documents related to Mr. Casolaro found anywhere on the premises.

numerous factors that might have caused Mr. Casolaro concern and/or despair during the last year of his life. By identifying those factors, we do not pretend to conclude that they necessarily contributed to Mr. Casolaro's suicide. Rather, we identify them in order to provide a complete picture of the events leading up to his death.

Financial Concerns

There is no question that, after spending over a year developing his Octopus theory, Mr. Casolaro found himself in a difficult financial condition and was greatly concerned as a result. As discussed above, Mr. Casolaro's home mortgage called for a balloon payment of $178,790 on August 9, 1991. Although the mortgage company extended the payment period for 30 days, that entire amount was coming due on September 8, 1991. The Martinsburg police investigation found that he had already borrowed substantial amounts from his family earlier in the year.

While he faced the balloon payment in the matter of weeks, Mr. Casolaro's income prospects appeared dim at the time of his death. Since the summer of 1990, when he first began to pursue the INSLAW story, he had repeatedly and unsuccessfully attempted to sell book and movie rights to the story. Although he was able to find an agent to help him with the process, our investigation found that he received little reason to be encouraged by his

future prospects.[7] On April 20, 1991, he wrote to his agent, Herb Karlitz, of his growing financial problems:

> I must explain how much deeper in debt I am. Every month that goes by without income puts another $4,500 or so on my liability just keeping my family and self alive. On top of that, my mortgage which is now up to $300,000 [sic] is scheduled for final payment in September 1991.

Three months later, on July 22, 1991, Mr. Casolaro sent a new proposal to Mr. Karlitz outlining the Octopus theory. In a cover letter, he wrote:

> This is my final week for these marathon hours over the last 12 months. Encountering this odyssey, meeting it with my whole life, is to grapple with something personal since I've risked everything. By Friday, I have to come up with about $5000 just to cover my mortgage payment and my real estate taxes and in September I'll be looking into the face of an oncoming train. Father, what will I do?

Dr. Tony Casolaro told us that his brother would never have committed suicide over money. He explained that their family was very close, several members had done quite well financially and his brother always knew that he could turn to his family for financial resources.

<u>The Onset of Multiple Sclerosis</u>

As discussed above, the autopsy revealed that Mr. Casolaro had been suffering from multiple sclerosis at the time of his death. We are unaware of any direct evidence that the disease was diagnosed before his death and do not believe that he ever indicated to anyone that he was suffering from MS. In fact, our

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[7] An agent for the Creative Artists Agency wrote to Mr. Casolaro's primary agent after having met with Mr. Casolaro in December 1990: "To expect 'cloak and dagger' and to get slapstick was quite scintillating."

investigation indicates that the last time he had been to a doctor was 18 months before his death when he needed emergency treatment after accidentally dropping a barbell on his head.

However, there are some indications that the disease was beginning to affect his life regardless of whether he knew it was MS. For example, during June and July 1991, some of Mr. Casolaro's friends noticed that he seemed to be having certain physical problems. Ann Klenk noted that Mr. Casolaro experienced some sort of motor difficulty with his right hand and had trouble opening a window in her house. On another occasion Mr. Casolaro, who was in apparently good physical shape, had trouble finishing a friendly volleyball game. On another occasion, he was too exhausted to help his friend Bill Webster paint his house. Casolaro also complained on separate occasions to both Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk about vision trouble. He began borrowing Wendy Weaver's eyeglasses for reading and reduced his night driving. Ms. Weaver observed that Mr. Casolaro also seemed to have weakness in his limbs, and that he could not perform various simple tasks around the house.

Also, several weeks before his death, he confided to his friend Ann Klenk that he was "having trouble thinking." According to Ms. Klenk, he said that "if I ever couldn't think I'd kill myself."

Finally, Mr. Casolaro approached Ann Weinfield, a long-time friend and nurse, several months before he died and asked her about "research" he was doing about "slow acting viruses,"

including MS. Ms. Weinfield recalls that he specifically asked her about the symptoms and consequences of MS.

Other Indications

There were some other indications that are, at the very least, consistent with a state of mind contemplating suicide. For example, several days before his death, Mr. Casolaro showed Zoe Gabrielle Milroy a letter that he had written to his son in which he imparted what Ms. Milroy described as "heavy" fatherly advice. Ms. Milroy told us that she immediately asked Mr. Casolaro if the letter was actually a suicide note. She said he changed the subject.

Four days before his death, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor, Olga Mokros, came to his house. She worked as a housekeeper for Mr. Casolaro. Ms. Mokros helped Mr. Casolaro pack a suitcase as he told her he was going on a trip. She asked if she should prepare the house for his son, who was expected on a visit from Colorado in two weeks. According to Ms. Mokros, Mr. Casolaro told her that he "would not see [his son]" anymore. He then took her into his basement office, and showed her where he kept his will.

There were other indications of strange and perhaps suicidal behavior as well. For example, in approximately May 1991, Mr. Casolaro was housesitting for his friend Bill Webster. According to Ms. Klenk, Mr. Casolaro called her at 5:00 one morning, and told her he had hurt himself. He said he had "spent the night on the roof" of the house and that he had fallen off and hurt his leg. Several days later, however, Mr. Webster called Ms. Klenk,

and told her he had found a broken ceramic object and some bloody towels in his basement. During the autopsy, the medical examiner found a healed scar on the inside of Mr. Casolaro's right leg near the femoral canal and vein.

Ms. Klenk and Mysterious also told us that in approximately October 1990, Mr. Casolaro had a mysterious auto accident in which his car went off the side of the highway. Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk and Wendy Weaver that he thought he had been forced off the road, but he did not want to report the incident to the police or to seek medical treatment. We were unable to learn enough about this incident to determine whether it was a legitimate accident, a staged suicide attempt or a homicide attempt.

Some of his friends noticed that he had become "obsessed" and "all consumed" with the "Octopus" story by early 1991. Two of Mr. Casolaro's closest friends, Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk, both report that he was completely immersed in the story. They both told us that Mr. Casolaro slept and ate very little during the final months of his life.

Jim Pittaway, who had known Casolaro for several years, told us that beginning in February 1991, Casolaro slipped into a "fantasy land" of conspiracy and intrigue, fed by the "pathological liars" who had been giving him information and that his obsession with the story worsened as the months progressed. Other friends say that Casolaro was "losing his grip" on reality.

Mr. Casolaro frequently spoke with various friends and acquaintances about his work, seeking their input about his

theories and bouncing ideas off them. Ann Klenk says his voice seemed constantly hoarse. Dr. Petrillo and Ann Klenk both told us that Mr. Casolaro was absorbing huge amounts of information; so much so that he was having trouble organizing it in his mind. Mr. Casolaro told Ms. Klenk that he was becoming frustrated at his inability to organize his thoughts and reduce his ideas to writing. Wendy Weaver and Ann Klenk report that he was "disappointed" and "hurt" at his failure to secure a publisher or obtain an advance. Ann Klenk, herself a professional journalist, suggested to Casolaro that he try to break the project into smaller, more manageable bits, and to try publishing it piecemeal, perhaps as a series of newspaper or magazine articles rather than as a book.

Not all of Casolaro's friends considered him to have been depressed or emotionally upset however. Ben Mason and Wendy Weaver, for example, report that Casolaro appeared enthusiastic about the "Octopus" project and insist that he continued to be generally upbeat and happy.

Psychological Autopsy

Finally, at our request, the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, located at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, conducted an equivocal death analysis, or "psychological autopsy," of Mr. Casolaro. Three FBI behavioral scientists prepared a report examining Mr. Casolaro's life history and his behavior during the final weeks and months of his life. They also reviewed the autopsy report. They concluded

that Mr. Casolaro had committed suicide and that he may have intentionally "scripted" the end to his own life.

The behavioral scientists noted that the "one common denominator in the life of Mr. Casolaro up until 1990 appeared to be feelings of high expectations of success, followed by disappointments." They found that while Mr. Casolaro "wore the facade of the eternal optimist . . . deep down inside he may have perceived himself as a failure as an author, an investigative reporter, a husband, a father and as a businessman." The behavioral scientists found his physical problems and possible concern about multiple sclerosis very significant, noting that "the thought of having a progressively debilitating disease may have been overwhelming."

Added to the other "stressors" in Mr. Casolaro's life, he may have believed that his situation was deteriorating and that "he was running out of time." The report noted that by "planting the seeds" in the minds of those close to him that he may have been killed, Mr. Casolaro thought he might be alleviating the guilt feelings his family and friends would feel for not preventing his suicide. In addition, Mr. Casolaro might have hoped that by making his death look mysterious, he might gain in death the journalistic fame he had never enjoyed in life, by "dying for a story," becoming "a martyr for truth and justice," only to have been "silenced on the eve of his greatest triumph by the forces of evil."

Most forensic scientists regard the psychological autopsy tool as a valuable aid in understanding the mental state leading to an individual's decision to commit suicide. However, the courtroom evidentiary value of psychological autopsies has recently been criticized in a law review article. Ogloff and Otto, Psychological Autopsy: Clinical and Legal Perspectives, 37 St. Louis U.L.J. 607 (1993) (attacking reliability of psychological autopsies). For purposes of this report, we simply regard the psychological autopsy as as instructive.

D. Possible Indications of Foul Play

There is no direct evidence that Mr. Casolaro's death was anything other than a suicide. Nor is there any direct circumstantial evidence placing any other individual in Mr. Casolaro's hotel room on either the evening of August 9 or the morning of August 10, 1991. Furthermore, the evidence appears to be wholly consistent with suicide. Nevertheless, several individuals have speculated that some sort of foul play was involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. In this section, we review those allegations and the evidence which is cited as supporting the charges.

Ethyl Alcohol Injection

INSLAW recently asserted that perhaps someone entered Mr. Casolaro's room and injected him above the spine with "ethyl alcohol absolute," thereby deadening his nerves. Dr. Cash, the West Virginia toxicologist, found no ethyl alcohol in Mr. Casolaro's blood. Moreover, Dr. Frost found no injection sites

anywhere on his body. Pure ethyl alcohol would have been particularly irritating to the skin, but no such irritations were found during the autopsy.

We asked Dr. Yale Caplan, a Baltimore toxicologist and former President of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, about the "ethyl alcohol absolut" theory. He agreed with Dr. Frost that it would have been impossible for Casolaro to have received such an injection without Dr. Frost seeing evidence of it during the autopsy. Dr. Caplan also noted that such an injection would have to have been precisely and expertly made, with Casolaro's cooperation, for it to have achieved a "nerve-deadening" effect.

Involvement of Mr. Riconsciuto

On September 30, 1991, Robert Booth Nichols, one of Mr. Casolaro's primary sources, told Detective Sergeant Swartwood of the Martinsburg Police Department that he thought Mr. Casolaro had been murdered and that Michael Reconosciuto was probably involved in some way. He did not and has not provided any basis for those allegations other than his claims that Mr. Casolaro was investigating some dangerous individuals.

We are unaware of any evidence linking Mr. Riconosciuto to Mr. Casolaro's death. Further, Mr. Riconosciuto was in prison in Tacoma, Washington, awaiting trial on methamphetamine charges, on the day Mr. Casolaro's body was discovered.

Involvement of Robert Booth Nichols

Robert Booth Nichols, a self-styled "international businessman," was one of Mr. Casolaro's primary sources. Telephone records from the last few months of Mr. Casolaro's life indicate that the two men spoke regularly and at length during that time period.[8]

According to several of Mr. Casolaro's friends, he spoke often of Mr. Booth Nichols and described him as a mysterious figure with connections to Japanese organized crime, the intelligence community and international arms dealers. Mr. Casolaro told several friends that he had heard from other sources that Mr. Booth Nichols was dangerous, and that he had been involved in several murders.

An article in the January 1993 issue of the Spy Magazine suggests that Mr. Booth Nichols may have had Mr. Casolaro killed because he feared Mr. Casolaro was about to expose him as a someone who had years earlier offered to become an FBI informant against the mafia. We found no evidence that he had anything to do with Mr. Casolaro's death. Furthermore, he was in London on the day that Mr. Casolaro died.[9]

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[8] Mr. Booth Nichols and Mr. Casolaro also met at least once during the early summer of 1991. The two men had dinner at a restaurant in Virginia. The following day, Mr. Casolaro introduced him to his friend Wendy Weaver. Contrary to some published reports, Ms. Weaver told us that Mr. Booth Nichols did not punch, grab or beat up anyone in a bar while she was with him and that he did not boast of connections with organized crime.

[9] Though Mr. Booth Nichols conveyed an image of intrigue to Mr. Casolaro, it is clear that at least some of that image was exaggerated. For example, in a lawsuit against the Los Angeles Police Department, he testified that he had been a member of the United States intelligence community for many years. (Booth

Involvement of Peter Videnieks

Mr. Riconosciuto and others have suggested that Peter Videnieks, the Department of Justice contracting officer on the PROMIS contract, was also somehow involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. Again, there is no evidence whatsoever of Mr. Videnieks's involvement. The sole "connection" appears to be the fact that Mr. Videniek's wife works for Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the state in which Mr. Casolaro's death occurred.

In addition, Charles Hayes, the Kentucky salvage dealer, told Martinsburg police that Peter Videnieks and Dr. Earl Brian had gone to the Sheraton Inn in Martinsburg around the time of Mr. Casolaro's death to play in a "high-stakes poker game, requiring $10,000 minimum to sit at the table." The police found it difficult to believe that gaming of that magnitude could have been going on in Martinsburg without their knowledge. Nevertheless, they investigated this lead but were unable to corroborate it. As discussed above, we believe Mr. Hayes lacks credibility.

During an interview with us, Mr. Videnieks denied having any involvement in Mr. Casolaro's death and claimed that he was with his wife at their summer cottage in Treadwell, New York, from

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Nichols v. City of Los Angeles, No. NCC 31322B, Trial Transcript, Mar. 11, 1993, 32 et seq.) No evidence supports that claim. In fact, we were informed by the CIA that Mr. Booth Nichols applied to the CIA for a job in 1972 but was not successful. Mr. Booth Nichols also testified that he had once "been instructed" to make a bid to purchase the assets of the Summa Corporation in the late 1970s, following Howard Hughes' death. (Id. 141-51). The documents connected to that incident, however, reflect that Summa summarily rejected Booth Nichols' overtures.

August 5 to August 11, 1991. His personnel records reflect that he was on leave during this time period, and a credit card receipt shows that he made a purchase at a bookstore in Oneonta, New York on August 9, 1991. His telephone records indicate that a call was placed to his brother from the Treadwell cottage on August 9, 1991 at 8:35 p.m.

We have no reason to question Mr. Videniek's claim that he was in New York on August 10, 1991 and are unaware of any evidence linking Mr. Videnieks to Mr. Casolaro's death.

Involvement of Joseph Cueller

Army Reserve Major Joseph Cuellar also was in contact with Mr. Casolaro during the last few months of his life. Mr. Casolaro apparently met Mr. Cuellar by chance one afternoon in May 1991 at "The Sign of the Whale" bar in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Cuellar had gone to the bar expecting to meet some friends who were going to celebrate his return from Operation Desert Storm. Mr. Casolaro, who was already seated at the bar waiting for his friend Lynn Knowles when Mr. Cueller arrived, struck up a conversation with Mr. Cuellar. Mr. Cuellar talked of his exploits in the Army special forces, and, according to Mr. Cueller, Mr. Casolaro became fascinated. After Ms. Knowles arrived, she listened as the two men discussed various military issues. When Mr. Cuellar's friends arrived, they made arrangements to meet again.

The two men talked on the phone several times after they first met. They also saw each other at least two additional times. In addition, Mr. Cuellar started dating Ms. Knowles.

During one of their conversations, Mr. Casolaro apparently asked about various individuals involved in his "Octopus" story. Mr. Cuellar told him he knew Peter Videnieks. According to Mr. Cueller, he explained that he knew Mr. Videnieks because his former fiance had worked with Mr. Videnieks' wife in the Capitol Hill office of West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd. Both Mr. Cuellar and Mr. Videnieks told us that their relationship was social, that they had double-dated with their significant others a number of times, and that they saw less of each other after Mr. Cuellar broke up with his fiance.

Once he learned of Mr. Cuellar's relationship with Mr. Videnieks, Mr. Casolaro asked Mr. Cuellar repeatedly to arrange a meeting with Mr. Videnieks. Mr. Casolaro wanted to interview Mr. Videnieks about the allegations made by Mr. Riconosciuto in his March 1991 affidavit that Mr. Videnieks had threatened him. Mr. Cueller called Mr. Videnieks to try to arrange a meeting, but Mr. Videnieks refused.[10]

After Mr. Casolaro died, Mr. Cuellar stopped dating Ms. Knowles. She told us that at one point, as their relationship

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[10] According to Mr. Cuellar, Mr. Casolaro confided in him near the end of his life, expressing frustration that he had become so wrapped up in the "Octopus" story that he had lost his perspective and was unable to arrange the material into a cohesive story. Mr. Casolaro also told him that he was in financial distress and that he was close to losing his house.

was deteriorating, he made a veiled threat to her, stating that she was asking too many questions about Mr. Casolaro, that she had two children, and she would not be doing them a favor if she were to wind up like Mr. Casolaro or another journalist who had been killed in Guatemala. Mr. Cuellar denied making those statements to her.

Several people have suggested that Mr. Cuellar was somehow involved in Mr. Casolaro's death. We found no evidence supporting that hypothesis. On the day Mr. Casolaro died, August 10, 1991, Cuellar was in Washington, D.C., working on his "outprocessing" from Desert Storm, and his "in-processing" into the Southern Command. Several witnesses ~~have verified~~ corroborate that he was in Washington on August 10, 1991.

Threats Directed at Mr. Casolaro

During the last few weeks of his life, Mr. Casolaro told several of his friends that he had been receiving death threats over the telephone. In addition, Mr. Casolaro's neighbor, Olga Mokros, told us that she was in Mr. Casolaro's house on the Monday before he died, that she answered the phone, and that the caller uttered a death threat. She could not recall any other specific occasions on which Mr. Casolaro received such a call, even though she was at his house nearly every day. Mr. Casolaro also told several people that the story he was working on was "dangerous" and that he sent his younger brother John away from the house because of the danger. According to Dr. Tony Casolaro,

his brother once told him, "If I die, don't believe it was an accident."

NO It is impossible for us to assess at this time the seriousness and extent of these threats. However, several of Casolaro's closest friends told us they now believe, with the benefit of hindsight, that he invented at least some of the threatening phone calls and the other "dangers" involved in his work so that people would believe, after he committed suicide, that he might have been murdered. Jim Pittaway told us that he thinks Mr. Casolaro committed suicide and that he "shrouded his death in mystery" so that his conspiracy theories would outlive him. Lillian Pittaway, Jim Pittaway's wife, described Mr. Casolaro as self-destructive. Zoe Gabrielle Milroy, a close friend of Mr. Casolaro's for fourteen years, believes that he "perpetrated this conspiracy theory" to make his death seem mysterious and to ease the pain his family would suffer from an outright suicide. Pete Kennedy, a guitarist and friend, shares Ms. Milroy's view that Mr. Casolaro wanted everyone to think he was in danger, so that his death would appear mysterious. Ms. Milroy also discounts the views of those who say Mr. Casolaro was not depressed, noting that he was a "consummate actor" who could be "laughing on the outside, but very hurting on the inside."

"Village Voice" Phone Call

On Sunday night, August 11, 1991, the day before news of Casolaro's death had become public, a writer at the Village Voice in New York City named Dan Bishoff received a telephone call.

Mr. Bishoff later told the Martinsburg police that he was in his office that evening when the phone rang on a direct dial line. The caller told him, "There has been a death of a journalist in West Virginia that needs to be looked into." Mr. Bishoff told the police that the caller may have mentioned the name "Casserole."

We spoke with Mr. Bishoff. Although he continues to assert that he received a telephone call on August 11, he said that, upon reflection, he is not sure whether the caller mentioned the name "Casserole" or anything else approximating Casolaro. He told us that many "conspiracy buffs" had his inside telephone line, and he frequently received calls about dead journalists. He indicated that at the time he spoke with the Martinsburg police, he "wanted it to be true" that Mr. Casolaro had been murdered, but that now he believes he committed suicide. He told us that he now regards the Sunday night telephone call as "not significant."

Casolaro's Fear of Needles and Blood

Some of Mr. Casolaro's family and friends suggest that he would not have committed suicide by cutting his wrists because he was frightened of needles and the sight of blood. We spoke with several doctors and dentists who treated Mr. Casolaro during the years before his death. Tony Casolaro's medical partner, Dr. Steven Zimmet, told us that during a routine physical examination approximately two years before Casolaro died, Casolaro put up a fuss before submitting to a blood test. However, Dr. Stanley

Levin, who performed a root canal on Casolaro in December 1990, told us that Mr. Casolaro exhibited no fear of needles, blood, pain, or any of the other incidents of oral surgery.

Casolaro's Planned Meeting In West Virginia

Mr. Casolaro told many of his friends and family that he was going to West Virginia to meet a "source." No one with whom we spoke recalls Casolaro ever identifying who it was he supposedly planned to meet. Mr. Casolaro himself was inconsistent in his description of the "source," telling the Weinfields that he did not know the identity of the person he was going to meet; telling Lillian Pittaway that he was going to meet someone who would give him his "biggest tip;" and telling Ben Mason that he was going to see "the guys."

As discussed in some detail above, we were able to account for most of Mr. Casolaro's time in West Virginia. We were unable to find any conclusive evidence that he met with anyone while in Martinsburg other than his chance meetings with various individuals at bars and restaurants. However, as noted above, a waitress at ~~the Stone Crab Inn~~ Hamilton's said she saw Mr. Casolaro meeting with a ~~"dark-skinned"~~ Iranian or Arab individual on Thursday, August 8. Also, William Turner claims to have met with Mr. Casolaro on the afternoon of August 9.[11]

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[11] Mr. William Turner recently told the Hamiltons, who relayed the information to us, that Mr. Casolaro planned to meet in Martinsburg with Peter Videnieks, Joseph Cuellar, an unidentified person from Senator Byrd's office, an unidentified IRS employee and attorney Robert Altman. A caller to the "Unsolved Mysteries" hot line reported seeing Clark Clifford and Robert Altman driving in Martinsburg on the day of Mr. Casolaro's

For the reasons indicated above, we are not convinced that either of these meetings took place though we do not reject out of hand the possibility that one or both actually occurred. Regardless whether these meetings took place, there is no evidence linking any of the alleged participants in the meetings to Mr. Casolaro's death.

The Paper in Casolaro's Shoe

During forensic testing, the West Virginia State Police Crime Laboratory found a folded piece of paper inside Mr. Casolaro's left shoe. The shoe had been found in Room 517, next to the bed. The paper had indentations, as if someone had written something on a page on top of the paper. The laboratory determined that the paper had come from the same legal pad on which Mr. Casolaro had written the suicide note. The laboratory was able to reproduce the impressions left on the paper. The writing was Mr. Casolaro's; and the paper read as follows:

Outline

Chapter on 1980.
Terrorist underground. Afghanistan. Mideast. Iran.
John Philip Nichols after arrival
Indian Reservation
Fred Alvarez
Paul Morasca
Philip Arthur Dempson
Fresno
Hercules -- Bill Kilpatrick The Big Tex -- Ricono
San Francisco
Finish up chapter w/ Paul M. & Fred A. / ord

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death in a late model Chevrolet Caprice. We have no reason to believe either of these claims.

There is no indication when Casolaro had written those words, or why he had put the piece of paper inside his shoe.

Lack of Documents

Perhaps the most troubling issue surrounding Mr. Casolaro's death is that none of his notes or other papers regarding his Octopus investigation were found either in the Sheraton hotel room or in his car. Several of his friends and family members told us that Mr. Casolaro typically carried a significant number of notes and documents with him. Further, if he had travelled to Martinsburg to meet with additional sources for his story, he likely would have had some documents with him. Finally, Mr. Turner claims to have given Mr. Casolaro two manilla envelopes full of documents on August 9, 1991.

No

No

The local police authorities conducted searches of Mr. Casolaro's hotel room, his car, the hotel and the local areas in search of documents and/or a briefcase. They were unable to locate anything of relevance. Ms. Klenk did, however, find many notes and other documents in Mr. Casolaro's house shortly after his death.

Although we do not consider Mr. Turner to be a credible source of information and therefore discount his story, we were concerned that no documents relating to the Octopus were found in Mr. Casolaro's hotel room given the statements of his friends and family. However, there is no credible evidence that any such documents were ever in his room and subsequently disappeared. It is also quite possible that Mr. Casolaro drove to Martinsburg

with the intention of committing suicide thus obviating the need to bring along any documents. In any event, the absence of such documents, even in combination with the other questions raised by various individuals, is woefully inadequate to dispel the compelling physical evidence that Mr. Casolaro took his own life.

X. Conclusion

The overwhelming physical evidence points to the conclusion that Mr. Casolaro committed suicide: the crime scene, the autopsy, the blood splatter report and the toxicology report as well as the other aspects of the investigation undertaken by the Martinsburg police and us. Furthermore, there were indications during the last few months of Mr. Casolaro's life that he was despondent and exhausted. Although there were mistakes made during the original investigation into the death (most particularly the failure to seal the room and the early embalming of the body), we have no reason to believe that the original investigations were not thorough or undertaken in anything other than the utmost good faith. Based on our review of all the evidence, we concur with the conclusion reached by Martinsburg police authorities that Mr. Casolaro took his own life.

We reached that conclusion after carefully considering the questions and concerns raised by his family and friends as well as by others. After reviewing them, we believe that many of those questions are typical of the types of questions that follow any suicide. As for the allegations of foul play raised by some individuals, there is simply no evidence supporting the

involvement of any of the individuals identified in Mr. Casolaro's death.